

## **Exploring the Garden of Uzza: Death, Burial and Ideologies of Kingship**

In an article published in a recent volume of this journal, Nadav Na'aman argues that the burial place of the kings of Judah was relocated in the eighth century BCE from the Jerusalem palace to an alternative site, the Garden of Uzza<sup>(1)</sup>. His argument is founded upon a change in the formulaic burial notices given for the kings of Judah in the books of Kings. As is well known, almost every Judahite monarch up to and including Ahaz is said to have been buried “with his ancestors in the City of David”<sup>(2)</sup>, whilst the burial notices for Ahaz’s successors are either inconsistent or non-existent: Manasseh is buried “in the garden of his house in the Garden of Uzza” (2 Kgs 21,18); Amon’s body is interred “in his tomb in the Garden of Uzza” (21,26); Josiah is buried “in his tomb” (23,30); the resting places of Hezekiah and Jehoiaquim go unmentioned though their deaths are acknowledged (20,21; 24,6); Jehoahaz is said to die whilst in Egyptian captivity (23,34); and neither the deaths nor the burials of Jehoiachin and Zedekiah are noted. Given the important theological and narrative functions of the death and burial notices in emphasizing the continuity of the Davidic dynasty<sup>(3)</sup>, these variations have proved problematic for many commentators.

In seeking to account for the variations among the burial notices of the later kings of Judah, Na'aman proposes that Hezekiah established a new royal burial ground away from the traditional site in the palace. This relocation, he argues, occurred in response to priestly concerns that the palace tombs defiled the adjacent temple, such as may be reflected in Ezek 43,7-9<sup>(4)</sup>, in which YHWH demands that the

(1) “Death Formulae and the Burial Place of the Kings of the House of David”, *Bib* 85 (2004) 245-254.

(2) The subclause “(buried) with his ancestors” is not included in the burial notices for David (1 Kgs 2,10), Solomon (11,43), or Abijam (15,8).

(3) B.O. LONG, *1 Kings with an Introduction to Historical Literature* (FOTL 9; Grand Rapids, MI 1984) 22-28; see also K.-J. ILLMAN, *Old Testament Formulas about Death* (Åbo 1979) 37-48.

(4) So R. WEILL, *La cité de David*. Compte rendu des fouilles exécutées à Jérusalem, sur le site de la ville primitive: Campagne de 1913-1914 (Paris 1920) 35-40. N. Na'aman correlates Hezekiah’s decommissioning of the palace tombs

people of Israel remove the defiling presence of “the corpses of their kings” which appear to be situated next to the temple<sup>(5)</sup>. He contends that this alternative burial site is the Garden of Uzza, in which Manasseh and Amon are said to be buried in 2 Kgs 21,18.26. In the first of these verses, the Garden of Uzza appears to be equated with Manasseh’s palace garden (גן ביתו, “the garden of his house”). On this basis, Na’aman confidently identifies the Garden of Uzza with another garden mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, the “King’s Garden” (גן המלך), to which brief references are found in 2 Kgs 25,4; Jer 39,4; 52,7 and Neh 3,15. This hypothesis is not only held to account for the change in the death and burial notices, but is also offered as an explanation for the absence of any referral to the burial place of Hezekiah, as the king was not buried “with his ancestors in the City of David”, but, according to this theory, in the new royal cemetery in the Garden of Uzza. Lest this disassociation from his Davidic ancestors diminish the favourable portrayal of Hezekiah, Na’aman suggests that the biblical author deliberately cut short his burial formula and ascribed the transfer of the royal burial place to Manasseh, a monarch portrayed in Kings as the most villainous of all the kings of Judah.

This is not in itself an innovative proposal. Brian Schmidt reaches similar conclusions in his discussion of Ezek 43,7-9<sup>(6)</sup>, suggesting that a tradition underlying the burial notices in the books of Kings claimed that Hezekiah relocated the royal tombs in anticipation of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem, fearing their desecration by the enemy. This tradition, he proposes, was altered by the biblical author in view of his contrasting assessments of Hezekiah and Manasseh, so that Manasseh was portrayed negatively as the instigator of the new burial site, and Hezekiah’s interment in the Garden of Uzza was a detail suppressed in the more positive account of his reign.

Both Na’aman and Schmidt are right to recognize the ideological significance of the death and burial notices in the books of Kings. Indeed, I have suggested elsewhere that the location of Manasseh’s

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with the removal of the Nehushtan from the temple (2 Kgs 18,4), as discussed in his article, “The Debated Historicity of Hezekiah’s Reform in the Light of Historical and Archaeological Research”, ZAW 107 (1995) 179-195.

(5) The textual difficulties of Ezek 43,7-9 have given rise to a variety of interpretations, as indicated below.

(6) *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*. Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition (FAT 11; Tübingen 1994; repr. Winona Lake, IN 1996) 250-254. Na’aman does not refer to Schmidt’s discussion.

burial “in the garden of his house in the Garden of Uzza” in 2 Kgs 21,18 functions as a part of the biblical writer’s damning judgement of Manasseh, signalling the king’s post-mortem displacement from his ancestral line<sup>(7)</sup>. Moreover, it is clear that the ideological importance of royal burials was also perceived by other tradents of the biblical traditions. As many commentators have observed, the Chronicler appears to tailor his burial notices to suit his theological appraisal of each monarch<sup>(8)</sup>. Thus the non-specification of a burial place for the favoured king Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20,21 is remedied in 2 Chr 32,33 with a detailed description of Hezekiah’s honourable burial alongside his Davidic ancestors. In view of this theological tendency, it is notable that the Chronicler’s rehabilitated Manasseh is not given a garden burial, but is simply buried בֵּיתוֹ, “in his house” (33,20), whilst the burial of the unrepentant Amon is not even mentioned (33,25).

Similarly, the absence of a burial notice for Jehoiakim in 2 Kgs 24,6 appears to be rectified in a tradition reflected in Greek versions of the biblical regnal accounts, in which it is claimed that the sinful king Jehoiakim was buried in the κηπὼ Οζα, “Garden of Oza” (4 Kgdms Lucianic 24,6) or a place named Γανοζα, “Ganoza” (2 Par 36,8); the former appears to be a translation and the latter a transliteration of the designation גַּן עֻזָּא, “Garden of Uzza”. This tradition concerning Jehoiakim’s burial may have arisen in direct response to the claim reflected in MT 2 Kgs 24,6 that he “slept with his ancestors”, a formulaic expression argued by many to refer to actual burial in an ancestral tomb or grave<sup>(9)</sup>, and perhaps here taken to indicate the royal burial place last specified in the books of Kings, the Garden of Uzza. However, it is equally likely that the tradition locating Jehoiakim’s burial in the Garden of Uzza alongside the reprobates Manasseh and Amon served to compound his villainous biblical portrayal in assigning him a disreputable grave away from

(7) F. STAVRAKOPOULOU, *King Manasseh and Child Sacrifice*. Biblical Distortions of Historical Realities (BZAW 338; Berlin – New York 2004) 44-45.

(8) E.g., E. BLOCH-SMITH, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (JSOT/ASORMS 7/JSOTSS 123; Sheffield 1992) 118-119; H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, *1 & 2 Chronicles* (NCB; London 1982) 388.

(9) E.g., G.R. DRIVER, “Plurisma Mortis Image”, *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman* (eds. M. BEN-HORIN – B.D. WEINRYB – S. ZEITLIN) (Leiden 1962) 128-143, esp. 141; BLOCH-SMITH, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 110; cf. L. WÄCHTER, *Der Tod im Alten Testament* (Arbeiten zur Theologie II/8; Stuttgart 1967) 71-72; ILLMAN, *Old Testament Formulas*, 44-47.

those of his more favoured ancestors in the City of David<sup>(10)</sup>. This is supported by Jer 22,19 and 36,30, in which Jehoiakim is divinely threatened with a dishonourable burial.

In spite of his recognition that the Garden of Uzza carries negative ideological connotations, Na'aman is not discouraged in seeking to identify the garden as an historical location. As indicated above, the apparent correlation of the Garden of Uzza with a palace garden in 2 Kgs 21,18 prompts him to assume that the Garden of Uzza and the King's Garden mentioned in 25,4; Jer 39,4; 52,7 and Neh 3,15 are one and the same. This in turn enables him to locate the Garden of Uzza not in the city, but just beyond the walls of Jerusalem, in accordance with details gleaned from biblical descriptions of the city walls in Neh 2,14-15 and 3,15-16<sup>(11)</sup>. Yet his uncritical assumption of the historicity of the biblical accounts renders this proposal problematic. Discerning the historical reliability of the biblical material pertaining to royal burial sites is notoriously difficult, particularly in view of the theological and ideological tendencies of the biblical traditions as reflected in MT and the Versions. Though there is a valid place for historical reconstruction in scholarly discussions of the burial places of Judah's monarchs, archaeological evidence for distinctly royal tombs in and around Jerusalem remains elusive. More specifically, it is unwise to subject the biblical Garden of Uzza merely to simplistic tests of topographical hypotheses, for it is likely that a number of religious and ideological concepts underlie the biblical references to this garden. Accordingly, it is proposed here that the biblical claim of royal burial in this location is more complex, and far more significant, than is generally recognized.

In discussing the Garden of Uzza, scholarship has tended to focus upon the mysterious עֹזַא in whose name the garden would appear to be designated. Commentators generally adopt one of three positions: first, that the name is a contracted form of that of the diseased Judahite king Uzziah (עֲזִיָּה) — itself a variant of the name Azariah (עֲזַרְיָה) — whose garden was utilised for the burials of Manasseh and Amon<sup>(12)</sup>; second,

<sup>(10)</sup> STAVRAKOPOULOU, *King Manasseh*, 40; see also S. DELAMARTER, "The Vilification of Jehoiakim (a.k.a. Eliakim and Joiakim) in Early Judaism", *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition* (eds. C.A. EVANS – J.A. SANDERS) (JSNTSS 154/SSEJC 6; Sheffield 1998) 190-204, esp. 196-198.

<sup>(11)</sup> "Death Formulae", 249-250; cf. M. AVI-YONAH, "The Walls of Nehemiah – A Minimalist View", *IEJ* 4 (1954) 239-248.

<sup>(12)</sup> S. YEIVIN, "The Sepulchres of the Kings of the House of David", *JNES* 7 (1948) 30-45, esp. 33-35.

that the garden's designation recalls the character named Uzza (variously rendered עֶזָּא or עֶזָּא in MT), who was killed upon touching the ark of God during its procession to the threshing floor, giving rise to the toponym Perez-uzza (2 Sam 6,3-8; 1 Chr 13,7-11)<sup>(13)</sup>; and lastly, that the garden was a cult place dedicated to the Arabian deity *al-Uzza*<sup>(14)</sup>. Yet, whilst none of these proposals has proved persuasive enough to attract widespread acceptance, the garden itself, as distinct from its name, also warrants attention.

From earliest times, cultivated spaces filled with trees and plants were accorded a special role in ancient Near Eastern cultures, encapsulating the means of subsistence (protective shade and fertile soils) within the controlled bounds of human endeavour. As symbols of cultivated fertility, gardens were imbued with a notable religious significance, as is evident in Mesopotamian texts describing the lush gardens of the gods, which are watered by cosmic rivers and stocked with fruits, spices and medicines, and references to temple gardens, in which their divine owners were believed to enjoy walking, and in which certain rituals were performed<sup>(15)</sup>. The divine power and controlling order manifested in gardens was also perceived in oppositional relation to the mythic concept of the uncultivated wilderness, in which chaotic malice might reside<sup>(16)</sup>. Indeed, biblical portraits of the Garden of Eden exhibit many of these inherited characteristics<sup>(17)</sup>.

<sup>(13)</sup> E.g., I.W. PROVAN, *1 & 2 Kings* (NIBC; Carlisle 1995) 269.

<sup>(14)</sup> J. GRAY, "The Desert God 'Atr in the Literature and Religion of Canaan", *JNES* 8 (1949) 72-83, esp. 81; J.W. MCKAY, *Religion in Judah under the Assyrians, 732-609 BC* (SBT 26; London 1973) 24-25, 95; T.R. HOBBS, *2 Kings* (WBC 13; Waco, TX 1985) 309.

<sup>(15)</sup> See further D.J. WISEMAN, "Mesopotamian Gardens", *Anatolian Studies* 33 (1983) 137-144; A.L. OPPENHEIM, "On Royal Gardens in Mesopotamia", *JNES* 24 (1965) 328-333. It may be that trees and plants grown in these gardens were employed as offerings in the associated temple (so WISEMAN, "Mesopotamian Gardens", 141-142).

<sup>(16)</sup> Cf. M.S. SMITH, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism. Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford – New York 2001) 28-29; N. WYATT, "The Significance of the Burning Bush", *VT* 36 (1986) 361-365. On the deity as cultivator (e.g., Isa 41,19), see B. LANG, *The Hebrew God. Portrait of an Ancient Deity* (New Haven – London 2002) 139-169.

<sup>(17)</sup> E.g., Gen 2,8-3,24; Ezek 28,13-16; 31,8-9. See M. DIETRICH, "Das biblische Paradies und der babylonische Tempelgarten: Überlegungen zur Lange des Gartens Eden", *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte* (eds. B. EGO – B. JANOWSKI) (Tübingen 2001) 281-323; T. STORDALEN, *Echoes of Eden. Genesis 2-3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew*

Given their religious importance, gardens also played a notable ideological role in the socio-political promotion and propaganda of royalty. A number of Neo-Assyrian kings are credited with the creation of monumental gardens within or beside their palaces, which were both visually impressive and horticulturally prestigious in their collections of trees and plants gathered from the furthest reaches of the empire, demonstrating the royal mastery of other peoples, their gods, and the produce of their lands. Like their divine counterparts, these royal cultivators — or “creators” — also enjoyed strolling in their gardens<sup>(18)</sup>. Perhaps the most famous of ancient gardens are the so-called “Hanging Gardens of Babylon”, constructed by Nebuchadnezzar II in the sixth century BCE and modelled upon the Neo-Assyrian palace gardens planted by Sennacherib in Nineveh<sup>(19)</sup>. For the Persian king Cyrus the Great, a large monumental garden was an integral component of his palace at Pasargadae. There is evidence to suggest that this garden was intended to function as a central ceremonial location in the heart of the royal complex, for the palace was open-sided in adjoining the garden, and the garden itself contained stone features designed to support the royal throne and footstool<sup>(20)</sup>. In planting and cultivating gardens, these kings may have been imitating their divine counterparts, creating their own “heavens” on earth<sup>(21)</sup>.

In view of the ideological and religious symbolism of royal and temple gardens, the biblical claim that certain Judahite kings were buried in a garden is significant. The majority of commentators have assumed that the Garden of Uzza was simply a royal pleasure garden which was secondarily utilized as a burial ground, either to take the overspill from

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Literature (Leuven 2000); L.E. STAGER, “Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden”, *EI* 26 (1999) 183-194; ID., “Jerusalem as Eden”, *BAR* 26/3 (2000) 36-47, 66; S.R. SHIMOFF, “Gardens: From Eden to Jerusalem”, *JSJ* 26 (1995) 145-155.

<sup>(18)</sup> D. STRONACH, “The Royal Garden at Pasargadae: Evolution and Legacy”, *Archaeologia Iranica et Orientalis. Miscellanea in honorem Louis Vanden Berghe* (eds. L. DE MEYER – E. HAERINCK) (Leuven 1989) 475-502.

<sup>(19)</sup> S. DALLEY, “Nineveh, Babylon and the Hanging Gardens: Cuneiform and Classical Sources Reconciled”, *Iraq* 56 (1994) 45-58; ID., “The Hanging Gardens of Babylon at Nineveh”, *Assyrien im wandel der Zeiten* (eds. H. HAUPTMANN – H. WAETZOLDT) (HSO 6; Heidelberg 1997) 19-24.

<sup>(20)</sup> STRONACH, “Royal Garden at Pasargadae”, 480-482.

<sup>(21)</sup> Echoes of this concept may be reflected in the Arabic term *janna*, “(heavenly) garden”, “paradise”, cognate with Semitic *gn* and biblical ך, which are usually rendered “garden”.

the palace tombs<sup>(22)</sup> or, as Na'aman himself argues on the basis of Ezek 43,7-9, to appease temple priests whose efforts to maintain the purity of the sanctuary were compromised by the adjacent royal graves<sup>(23)</sup>. However, neither of these suggestions is persuasive. It is highly unlikely that Judah's royal tombs might have become overfull. Archaeological excavations of Iron Age II tombs surrounding Jerusalem suggest that, once a corpse had been laid out inside the tomb on a stone bench for some months, the bones of the deceased would be collected and deposited with those of the ancestors in a corner of the tomb, leaving the bench free for a newly-deceased member of the family<sup>(24)</sup>. Biblical expressions describing the dead as "gathered to the kin" or "gathered to the ancestors" may reflect this particular mortuary practice<sup>(25)</sup>.

The appeal to Ezek 43,7-9 as corroborative support for the view that the Garden of Uzza was pressed into service as an alternative royal burial ground is also unpersuasive. Not only does it assume that this difficult biblical text offers a perceptible reference to royal corpses (rather than, for example, offerings to the dead or mortuary memorials)<sup>(26)</sup>, it also accepts uncritically that this information is historically sound. Yet even if this text should record the concerns of Jerusalem priests over the royal graves in the final years of the pre-exilic temple, it would suggest that, despite the assumed burial of later Judahite kings at a new site, the purity of the temple continued to be threatened by the remains of earlier kings who had been buried in the original tombs. Thus the establishment of a new burial

(22) E.g., D.J. WISEMAN, *1 and 2 Kings* (TOTC; Leicester 1993) 293; M. COGAN – H. TADMOR, *II Kings. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11; Garden City, NY 1988) 270-271.

(23) "Death Formulae", 251-253; J. GRAY, *I & II Kings* (OTL; London 1970) 710-711.

(24) See further BLOCH-SMITH, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 41-52.

(25) E.g., Gen 25,8; 35,29; Num 20,24; Judg 2,10; Deut 32,50.

(26) On the possibility that these verses refer not to royal tombs but to ritual offerings for dead kings, see J.H. EBACH, "PGR = (Toten-)opfer? Ein Vorschlag zum Verständnis von Ez. 43,7,9", *UF* 3 (1971) 365-368, and the more recent discussions in M.S. ODELL, "What was the Image of Jealousy in Ezekiel 8?", *The Priests in the Prophets. The Portrayal of Priests, Prophets, and Other Religious Specialists in the Latter Prophets* (eds. L.L. GRABBE – A.O. BELLIS) (JSOTSS 408; London – New York 2004) 134-148; H. NIEHR, "The Changed Status of the Dead in Yehud", *Yahwism After the Exile. Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (eds. R. ALBERTZ – B. BECKING) (Assen 2003) 136-155, esp. 138-140, and the literature cited there. For the view that these verses refer to memorial monuments, see D. NEIMAN, "PGR: A Canaanite Cult-Object in the Old Testament", *JBL* 67 (1948) 55-60.



ground away from the temple as an act of cultic purification would have been wholly ineffectual if the tombs of earlier kings remained *in situ*<sup>(27)</sup>. Further weakening the support offered by Ezek 43,7-9 is the alternative interpretation of these verses as an indication of the central location of the Garden of Uzza within the palace complex next to the temple, as might be suggested by ביתו in 2 Kgs 21,18<sup>(28)</sup>. In view of these observations, it thus appears prudent to resist any appeal to Ezek 43,7-9 as evidence in favour of a relocation of the tombs of the Judahite kings.

Rather than viewing a garden burial as a secondary or alternative mortuary practice, it is possible that a garden was a most appropriate location for the interment of monarchs. Indeed, alongside the references in 2 Kgs 21,18.26 to royal burials in the Garden of Uzza, the Hebrew Bible offers further glimpses of an association of gardens with death and burial.

### 1. *Mortuary gardens in the Book of Isaiah*

In Isa 65,3-5 a group of worshippers are condemned for their seemingly illicit cult practices. They are described as:

3. a people who provoke me  
to my face continually,  
sacrificing in gardens (גנות),  
and burning incense on bricks,
4. the ones who sit inside the tombs  
and spend the night in secluded places<sup>(29)</sup>,  
who eat the flesh of pigs,  
and the broth of unclean things in their pots<sup>(30)</sup>,

<sup>(27)</sup> It might be suggested that the bones of all the kings were transferred to the new burial site, given the use of the formulaic phrase אֶת־עַמּוּנָתוֹ in 2 Kgs 21,18; however, Ezek 43,7-9 presents the temple of Ezekiel's time as enduring continued contamination from the פְּגַרֵי מַלְכֵיהֶם.

<sup>(28)</sup> So D.I. BLOCK, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI 1998) 584, n. 52; BLOCH-SMITH, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 119; GRAY, *I & II Kings*, 710-711.

<sup>(29)</sup> An Akkadian cognate occurring in Mesopotamian burial texts describes the grave as *ašar niširti*, “the secluded place” (so G. JONKER, *The Topography of Remembrance. The Dead, Tradition and Collective Memory in Mesopotamia* [SHR, 68; Leiden 1995] 194). For an alternative interpretation which reads בֵּין צוּרִים for בְּנִצּוּרִים, see M. DAHOOD, “Textual Problems in Isaiah”, *CBQ* 22 (1960) 400-409. On incubation rites, see T.J. LEWIS, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta, GA 1989) 159-160; S. ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree. Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah* (HSM 46; Atlanta, GA 2001) 194-202.

<sup>(30)</sup> Reading בְּכִלְיָהֶם, with 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, Tg., Vulg.



5. who say, “Keep to yourself,  
do not come near me,  
for I am too holy for you”.

The garden setting of ritual activities in these verses is of a piece with the broader Near Eastern cultural context, in which gardens held a particular religious significance, as the foregoing discussion has observed. Whilst the rather ambiguous nature of “sacrificing” (זבח) and “burning incense” (קטר) in v. 3 can reveal little about the precise function of these gardens as cult places<sup>(31)</sup>, the activities in the associated tombs are more telling. Several commentators propose that the practices described in v. 4 are those of a cult of dead ancestors, in which the participants are variously understood to worship, commemorate, placate, or communicate with their dead ancestors<sup>(32)</sup>. Certainly, a mortuary context is clearly indicated by the presence of tombs (קבר־ים), and there are good reasons to suggest that pigs were animals closely associated with the underworld<sup>(33)</sup>. Moreover, there is a wealth of evidence attesting to the possibility that cultic feeding (of the ancestors, the descendants, or both) played an important role in the veneration or commemoration of the dead, as attested by the presence of culinary vessels and food-stuffs in graves<sup>(34)</sup>. Thus whatever the

<sup>(31)</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> attests a marked variant of v. 3, reading חמה זובחים בגנות וינקו ידים על האבנים, “they sacrifice in the gardens and suck hands on the stones”. Some commentators have understood this as an allusion to ritualised sexual activity, a view perhaps encouraged by the biblical association of trees with the language of whoring elsewhere (e.g., Isa 57,3-5; Jer 3,6); see further ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 169-173; B. SCHRAMM, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*. Reconstructing the Cultic History of the Restoration (JSOTSS 193; Sheffield 1995) 156. For קטר, see D.V. EDELMAN, “The Meaning of *qittēr*”, VT 35 (1985) 395-404.

<sup>(32)</sup> E.g., LEWIS, *Cults of the Dead*, 158-160; M.S. SMITH, *The Early History of God*. Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient times (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, UK 2002) 165, 170; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB 19B; New York 2003) 271-272; cf. P. VOLZ, *Jesaja II*. Zweite Hälfte: Kapitel 40-66 (KAT 9; Leipzig 1932) 282.

<sup>(33)</sup> R. DE VAUX, “Le sacrifice des porcs”, *Von Ugarit nach Qumrân* (eds. J. HEMPEL – L. ROST) (BZAW 77; Berlin 1958) 250-265; F.J. STENDEBACH, “Das Schweineopfer” BZ 18 (1974) 265; cf. W. HOUSTON, *Purity and Monotheism*. Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law (JSOTSS 140; Sheffield 1993) 161-168; ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 209-212; J.L. KOOLE, *Isaiah Chapters 56-66* (HCOT; Leuven 2001) 416. Note also Isa 66,3, in which burning memorial incense appears to be associated with cultic swine.

<sup>(34)</sup> R.E. COOLEY, “Gathered to His People: A Study of a Dothan Family Tomb”, *The Living and Active Word of God*. Studies in Honor of Samuel J. Schultz (eds. M. INCH – R. YOUNGBLOOD) (Winona Lake, IN 1983) 47-58; BLOCH-SMITH, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 105-108, 122-126. The occasional funerary

precise purpose of the activities described in these verses, the view that they are best understood as rituals within a cult of the dead is probably correct. This may find further support in the broader context of the oracle surrounding these verses, in which the motif of ancestors and descendants is prominent (vv. 7.9). It would thus appear that in 65,3-4, the gardens are closely associated with tombs and mortuary rites. Though admittedly this text is not explicit in locating the tombs precisely within the confines of the gardens, the direct and intentional association of gardens and tombs is rendered wholly plausible in view of a further reference to garden cults in 66,17:

Those who sanctify and purify themselves (to go) to the gardens [גִּנּוֹת],  
following (the) one in the centre, eating the flesh of pigs  
and vermin and rodents,  
shall come to an end together — oracle of YHWH.

This is also a problematic verse, in which textual difficulties and interpretative uncertainties render some of the activities described imperceptible. Yet it portrays the gardens as sacred space in which rituals elsewhere associated with a cult of the dead are performed. It seems likely that this text is intended to refer to the same group of worshippers condemned in 65,3-5: both groups are accused of performing rituals in gardens, eating pigs' flesh and other unclean material, and as having a prominent concern for their sacred status. Moreover, these accusations employ the same language in referring to the gardens (גִּנּוֹת), the consumption of pigs' flesh (אָכַל בֶּשֶׂר הַחֲזִיר), and the consecrated nature of the worshippers (קֹדֶשׁ). Of particular note, however, is the fact that in 66,17, the feasting rituals occurring in the gardens are the same as those occurring in the tombs in 65,4. This suggests that the association of gardens and tombs in 65,3-5 is more than coincidental; rather, the tombs in which the worshippers sit and eat in v. 4 are best understood as being located within the gardens of the preceding verse.

In both 65,3-5 and 66,17, therefore, it would appear that the גִּנּוֹת under prophetic attack are mortuary gardens, cult places in which rituals directed at or concerned with the dead are performed. This contrasts with the more frequent and mistaken interpretation of 66,17

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association of Ugaritic *mrzḥ* is often discussed in relation to the cultic veneration of the dead, particularly with reference to Amos 6,7 and Jer 16,5-9; however, this is all extremely uncertain. See further J.L. McLAUGHLIN, "The *marzeah* at Ugarit: A Textual and Contextual Study", *UF* 23 (1991) 265-281; ID., *The marzeah in the Prophetic Literature*. References and Allusions in Light of Extra-Biblical Evidence (VTS 86; Leiden 2001); LEWIS, *Cults of the Dead*, 80-94.

as a condemnation of goddess worship<sup>(35)</sup>, which in its turn is fuelled by the assumption that a further Isaian critique of גִּזְרֵה in 1,29-30 is a veiled allusion to sacred groves dedicated to the goddess Asherah. This latter text reads:

29. For you will be ashamed<sup>(36)</sup> of the (mighty) trees<sup>(37)</sup> in which you delighted,  
and you will blush for the gardens (גִּזְרֵה) that you have chosen,  
30. for you will be like a tree<sup>(38)</sup> whose leaf is withered,  
and like a garden (גִּזְרֵה) without water.

Several commentators read these verses as an allusion to fertility rites supposedly associated with Asherah worship, taking as their cue the verb חָמַד, frequently rendered “delight”, “pleasure”, which, they assert, carries connotations of sexual lust<sup>(39)</sup>. This interpretation complements the use of a garden as a setting for love in the Song of Songs and comparative literature<sup>(40)</sup>, yet it is especially encouraged by biblical condemnations elsewhere of cult practices עֵץ רֶעֶנָן, “under every green tree”<sup>(41)</sup>, which many scholars take as references to ritual sexual intercourse<sup>(42)</sup>. However, there are good reasons to

<sup>(35)</sup> Most recently, J. Blenkinsopp (“The One in the Middle”, *Reading from Right to Left. Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of David J. Clines* [eds. J.C. EXUM – H.G.M. WILLIAMSON] [JSOTSS 373; Sheffield 2003] 63-75) has argued that the rituals occurring in the gardens of these verses are to be identified with Asherah worship. His argument hinges around the difficult phrase אֶחָד בְּתוֹךְ, “following (the) one in the centre”, which he takes as a reference to the role of a priestess of Asherah, favouring *qere* אֶחָד for *ketib* אֶחָד. However, given the textual difficulties of אֶחָד בְּתוֹךְ, this verse is unable to bear the interpretative weight placed upon it (cf. J.A. EMERTON, “Notes on Two Verses in Isaiah [26:16 and 66:17]”, *Prophecy. Essays Presented to Georg Fohrer on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* [ed. J.A. EMERTON] [BZAW 150; Berlin 1980] 21-25).

<sup>(36)</sup> Reading תבשו for MT יבשו.

<sup>(37)</sup> אֵילִים, frequently rendered “oaks”.

<sup>(38)</sup> אֵלֶּה, usually rendered “terebinth”.

<sup>(39)</sup> E.g., ACKERMAN, *Under Every Green Tree*, 187-188; cf. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 270-271.

<sup>(40)</sup> See further M.V. FOX, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison, WI 1985); W.G.E. WATSON, “Some Ancient Near Eastern Parallels to the Song of Songs”, *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed. Essays in Honour of John F.A. Sawyer* (eds. J. DAVIES – G. HARVEY – W.G.E. WATSON) [JSOTSS 195; Sheffield 1995] 253-271.

<sup>(41)</sup> E.g., Deut 12,2; 1 Kgs 14,23; 2 Kgs 16,4; Isa 57,5.

<sup>(42)</sup> E.g., J.L. MCKENZIE, *Second Isaiah*. Introduction, Translation and Notes (AB 20; Garden City, NY 1968) 157; J.N. OSWALT, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40-66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI 1998) 476-477; see also W.L. HOLLADAY, “On Every High Hill and Under Every Green Tree”, VT 11 (1961) 170-176.

consider it unlikely that Isa 1,29-30 refers to sexual practices. Firstly, a sexual connotation of the verb חמד is exceptional, for the majority of occurrences are found in a variety of non-sexual contexts, including those in which tree imagery is evident<sup>(43)</sup>. Secondly, the expression עץ רענן also occurs in non-sexual contexts, in which it appears to function in a metaphorical and polemical sense as a conceptual shorthand signalling religious disobedience<sup>(44)</sup>. As such, the sexual interpretation of 1,29-30 is unfounded. It is also unlikely that these verses refer to Asherah worship. Though the frequent rendering of the term אַשְׁרָה as “grove” in the Septuagint might suggest that trees and goddesses were interchangeable in the minds of ancient tradents of biblical traditions<sup>(45)</sup>, not every tree condemned in the Hebrew Bible should be taken as indicative of the outlawing of Asherah and her cult. After all, whilst the motif of a sacred tree is certainly well-attested as a symbol or manifestation of Asherah and other goddesses in the material culture of Syro-Palestine and its surrounding regions<sup>(46)</sup>, this motif was not exclusive to goddess cults. Though there is no mention of tombs, ancestors, or related rituals in these verses, text-critics are widely agreed that they are closely related in both theme and language to 65,3-5 and 66,17<sup>(47)</sup>, in which mortuary gardens and associated cult practices concerned with or devoted to the dead are criticised. Accordingly, and in view of the weaknesses of goddess-focused interpretations, the negative portrayal of trees and gardens in 1,29-30 is better understood as reflecting an Isaian polemic against cultic mortuary gardens.

<sup>(43)</sup> E.g., Exod 20,17; Ps 68,17 (ET 16); Job 20,20; Isa 44,9. The verb occurs in conjunction with tree motifs or tree imagery in Gen 2,9; 3,6; Song 2,3; Isa 53,2.

<sup>(44)</sup> E.g., 2 Kgs 16,4; 17,10; 2 Chr 28,4; Ezek 6,3; 20,28.

<sup>(45)</sup> The Mishneh also reflects an understanding of biblical occurrences of אַשְׁרָה as references to a tree, e.g., ‘Abodah Zarah 3,7.

<sup>(46)</sup> O. KEEL, *Goddesses and Trees, New Moon and Yahweh*. Ancient Near Eastern Art and the Hebrew Bible (JSOTSS 261; Sheffield 1998) 16-57; P. BECK, “The Tanaach Cult Stands: Iconographic Traditions in Iron I Cult Vessels”, *From Nomadism to Monarchy* (eds. N. NA’AMAN – I. FINKELSTEIN) (Jerusalem 1994) 417-446; K. JAROŠ, *Die Stellung des Elohisten zur kanaänischen Religion* (OBO 4; Göttingen 1974) 214-217; J.H. STUCKEY, “The Great Goddesses of the Levant”, *SSEAJ* 29 (2002) 28-57.

<sup>(47)</sup> See, for example, W.A.M. BEUKEN, “Isaiah Chapters lxx-lxxvi: Triton-Isaiah and the Closure of the Book of Isaiah”, *Congress Volume, Leuven 1989* (ed. J.A. EMERTON) (VTS 43; Leiden 1991) 204-221; P.A. SMITH, *Rhetoric and Redaction in Triton-Isaiah*. The Structure, Growth and Authorship of Isaiah 56-66 (VTS 62; Leiden 1995) 186.

In spite of the difficulties of 1,29-30, it would appear that the book of Isaiah contains within it a handful of texts illustrating or alluding to the close association of gardens with death and burial; these texts also suggest that garden burials were credited with a certain religious value—a possibility which has been overlooked by most commentators<sup>(48)</sup>. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to propose that the Garden of Uzza is not a pleasure garden, but a mortuary garden, akin to the גִּנְתָּא of Isa 65,3-5; 66,17 and perhaps also those of 1,29-30. Indeed, it may be that biblical גִּנְתָּא is, in certain contexts, better rendered “mortuary garden”, or even “cemetery”. Whilst this last is an attractive proposal, the limited attestations of biblical גִּנְתָּא in clear mortuary contexts preclude a more secure conclusion. However, this proposal does find notable support in Ugaritic religious practice.

## 2. A royal mortuary garden at Ugarit

The important place of the royal cult of deified or divinized dead ancestors at Ugarit is well known, though its details remain a focus for lively debate. Amidst the wealth of liturgical texts relating to this important aspect of Ugaritic monarchy is a description of a series of sacrifices and other offerings made by, or with the participation of, the king and his children (*KTU* 1.106). The offerings appear to be donated to various members of the divine realms, including the royal dead ancestors<sup>(49)</sup> and *ršp*, a deity frequently associated with the dead<sup>(50)</sup>. Strikingly, the designation given to one of the palace cult places in which these rituals occur is *gn* (lines 22, 23), which in Ugaritic, as in Biblical Hebrew, usually means “garden”. Moreover, the time at which this festival occurs is a spring month, which itself is designated *gn* (usually rendered in this context “Gannu”), perhaps reflecting the

<sup>(48)</sup> Cf. N. WYATT, “‘Supposing Him to be the Gardener’ (John 20,15): A Study of the Paradise Motif in John”, *ZNW* 81 (1990) 21-38. Wyatt’s article includes a brief discussion of biblical references to the Garden of Uzza, though it does not refer to the garden cults of Isaiah.

<sup>(49)</sup> See G. DEL OLMO LETE, *Canaanite Religion According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit* (Bethesda, MD 1999; repr. Winona Lake, IN 2004) 168-171, 220, 226, 229, and the literature cited there.

<sup>(50)</sup> See, for example, P. XELLA, “Le dieu Rashap à Ugarit”, *AAAS* 29-30 (1979-80) 145-162; H. NIEHR, “Zur Entstehung von Dämonen in der Religionsgeschichte Israels. Überlegungen zum Weg des Rešep durch die nordwest-semitische Religionsgeschichte”, *Die Dämonen-Demons* (eds. A. LANGE – H. LICHTENBERGER – K.E. DIETHARD RÖMHELD) (Tübingen 2003) 84-107.

garden location of some of the offerings<sup>(51)</sup>. Certainly, the seasonal and spatial setting of these rituals would appropriately cohere, for as Pardee observes, spring would be evident in the garden itself<sup>(52)</sup>. Some scholars, notably Xella<sup>(53)</sup> and del Olmo Lete<sup>(54)</sup>, have interpreted this Ugaritic ritual as a funerary practice<sup>(55)</sup>, drawing on the support of comparative inscriptional and archaeological evidence from Ebla concerning the veneration of dead kings and royal burial in the palace garden<sup>(56)</sup>. Consequently, and in independent support of the proposal here, they suggest that in this context, Ugaritic *gn* should be rendered “cemetery”, rather than “garden”<sup>(57)</sup>. Though neither Xella nor del Olmo Lete associates this ritual with those texts in Isaiah describing cult practices in a mortuary garden, they do draw attention briefly to the designation and function of the biblical עֵדֶן as a royal burial ground<sup>(58)</sup>.

The prominent role of the garden in the royal rituals of Ugarit is also suggested by archaeological excavations of the royal palace, which attest to a vast courtyard located within the eastern part of the palace complex. The courtyard contained a large enclosure filled with fertile soil, which has been widely identified as a garden<sup>(59)</sup>. Whilst the royal tombs appear to have been located in an adjacent part of the

<sup>(51)</sup> DEL OLMO LETE, *Canaanite Religion*, 219-220.

<sup>(52)</sup> D. PARDEE, *Les textes rituels* (Ras Shamra-Ugarit 12; Paris 2000) I, 596-597; ID., *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* (Atlanta, GA 2002) 104, n. 57.

<sup>(53)</sup> P. XELLA, “Aspekte religiöser Vorstellungen in Syrien nach den Ebla- und Ugarit-Texte”, *UF* 15 (1983) 279-290.

<sup>(54)</sup> G. DEL OLMO LETE, “Liturgia funeraria de los reyes de Ugarit (KTU 1.106)”, *SEL* 3 (1986) 55-72.

<sup>(55)</sup> *Contra* PARDEE, *Les textes rituels*, I, 597.

<sup>(56)</sup> P. XELLA, “Gunu(m)<sup>(ki)</sup> dans les texts d’Ebla”, *Nouvelles Assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires* 89 (1995) 80-81; P. MATTHIAE, “Princely Cemetery and Ancestors Cult at Ebla during the Middle Bronze II: A Proposal of Interpretation”, *UF* 11 (1979) 563-569. Royal garden burials are also known from Sumerian literature and textual and archaeological material from Mari, so P. TALON, “Les offrandes funéraires à Mari”, *Annuaire de l’Institut de Philologie et d’Histoire orientales et slaves* 22 (1978) 53-75.

<sup>(57)</sup> G. DEL OLMO LETE, “GN, el cementerio regio de Ugarit”, *SEL* 3 (1986) 62-64; cf. P. XELLA, “Aspekte religiöser Vorstellungen in Syrien nach den Ebla- und Ugarit-Texte”, *UF* 15 (1983) 279-290, esp. 288.

<sup>(58)</sup> DEL OLMO LETE, “GN, el cementerio regio”, 63-64; P. XELLA, “Il culto dei morti nell’Antico Testamento”, *Scritti in memoria di Angelo Brelich* (eds. V. LANTERNARI – M. MASSENZIO – D. SABBATUCCI) (Rome 1982) 645-666.

<sup>(59)</sup> C.F.A. SCHAEFFER, “Un jardin dans le Palais d’Ugarit”, *Ugaritica IV* (ed. C.F.A. SCHAEFFER) (Mission de Ras Shamra 15; Paris 1962) 15-25.

palace, they were easily accessible from the garden. Indeed, the architectural layout of the surrounding buildings, courts and internal avenues suggests that the garden was an area of crucial importance within the palace<sup>(60)</sup>. This is quite possibly the cult place of the mortuary ritual detailed in *KTU* 1.106<sup>(61)</sup>. Archaeological evidence from Ugarit thus appears to represent a notable point of reference in exploring the biblical Garden of Uzza. The biblical and non-biblical material surveyed thus far suggests that a plausible case based upon cumulative evidence can be constructed to support the proposal that, in certain contexts, biblical גִּנְהָן is better rendered “mortuary garden”, and that the accepted semantic range for this term might be expanded accordingly. The Ugaritic material is also suggestive of a garden-focused cult practice related to the veneration or commemoration of dead ancestors, shedding some light on the religious significance of the biblical assertion that kings Manasseh and Amon were buried in a garden (2 Kgs 21,18.26). However, little of any certainty can be claimed for the biblical material given that the nature of the evidence, as observed above, is cumulative, rather than conclusive. Indeed, Starodoub-Scharr has also noticed the possible parallels between the royal garden at Ugarit and the biblical Garden of Uzza, but minimizes any connection with a royal cult of dead ancestors on the presumed basis of a lack of evidence from the biblical world<sup>(62)</sup>. Yet it may be that rather more can be made of this connection.

### 3. *An iconographic mortuary garden at Kalḫu*

In 878 BCE, the Neo-Assyrian king Aššurnāṣirpal II relocated the capital of his empire from the city of Aššur to Kalḫu. The seat of royal power was now the newly-constructed Northwest Palace, famed for its magnificent interiors. Among these are hundreds of marble wall-slabs engraved in relief, depicting various scenes of kingship. The most

<sup>(60)</sup> K. STARODOUB-SCHARR, “The Royal Garden in the Great Royal Palace of Ugarit: To the Interpretation of the Sacral Aspect of the Royalty in the Ancient Palestine and Syria”, *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies*. Division A: The Bible and Its World (ed. R. MARGOLIN) (Jerusalem 1999) 253\*-268\*.

<sup>(61)</sup> PARDEE, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, 104, n. 57; DEL OLMO LETE, “GN, el cementerio regio”, 63. This is reluctantly accepted as a probability by STARODOUB-SCHARR, for whom the association of the palace garden with the ritual detailed in *KTU* 1.106 is less certain.

<sup>(62)</sup> “The Royal Garden”, 262\*.



frequent of images to decorate the marbled palace walls is the repeated scene of the sacred tree. The recurrent association of this motif and its variations with Neo-Assyrian kingship is widely recognized, though a consensus is yet to be reached concerning its meaning and function<sup>(63)</sup>. Seth Richardson has conducted a detailed study of the sacred tree scene and the nature of its occurrences in the Northwest palace<sup>(64)</sup>. He finds that whilst this scene might include images of the king or divine figures, it most frequently occurs alone and as the dominant motif in the palace, appearing 190 times throughout all its buildings, 96 of these in Room I, in which the sacred tree is the only motif. Though the function of this room is not clearly discernable, most are agreed that it was employed for a ritual purpose, and it seems probable that the room's function was bound up with the sacred trees covering its walls. Richardson observes that the number of sacred trees in Room I closely approximates the number of deceased kings listed in contemporary recensions of the Assyrian King List, that is, 100 dead kings. This, plus the near-correlation of 96 sacred trees in Room I and 94 sacred trees throughout the remainder of the palace, suggests that the repeated motif of the sacred tree represents a system directly related to the ritual use of the Assyrian King List. Accordingly, a plausible case can be constructed in arguing that each sacred tree in Room I represents a dead king<sup>(65)</sup>, and that this room played a role in a cult of royal ancestor veneration. This "garden of ancestors", as Richardson describes it, would have been of crucial ideological importance to Aššurnasirpal II, for in relocating his capital, he was leaving behind the royal tombs situated conventionally beneath the old palace. "A venerative royal cult to ancestors, situated on a grand scale in the new Kalḫu palace, would have supported Aššurnasirpal II's claims to legitimate and traditional kingship, and would have solved the peculiar

<sup>(63)</sup> E.g., B.N. PORTER, "Sacred Trees, Date Palms, and the Royal Persona of Ashurnasirpal II", *JNES* 52 (1993) 129-139; S. PARPOLA, "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy", *JNES* 52 (1993) 161-208.

<sup>(64)</sup> "An Assyrian Garden of Ancestors: Room I, Northwest Palace, Kalḫu", *SAAB* 13 (1999-2001) 145-216. I am grateful to Stephanie Dalley for bringing this article to my attention.

<sup>(65)</sup> In his discussion, Richardson is quick to acknowledge and to address the apparent disparity between the numbers of sacred trees and dead kings, for which he offers several solutions based upon new reconstructions of Room I and the arrangement of its trees, the grouping of dead kings into their dynasties, and comparative evidence concerning inconsistencies in Egyptian king lists.

problem and thorny issue of the relocation of the royal household without the relocation of the royal dead”<sup>(66)</sup>. This suggests that the veneration of ancestors need not be restricted to the precise site of their burial, leaving open the possibility that two or more locations might be employed within a cult of dead kings. Given the repeatedly demonstrated importance of gardens within Neo-Assyrian royal households, it is likely that the Northwest Palace included a garden in one of its courtyards, which may have performed a complementary religious function alongside the “garden of ancestors” in Room I. More important, however, are the ideological dimensions of the iconography of Room I, which indicate the elevated nature of the horticultural framing of royal mortuary beliefs and practices.

The marble reliefs adorning the walls of Room I in the Northwest Palace at Kalḫu would thus appear to present an iconographic mortuary garden, within which the dead ancestors of the royal line are imaged as sacred trees. The alignment of the sacred tree motif with ancient Near Eastern kingship is well known<sup>(67)</sup>. Given the regenerative nature of trees and their pervading association with the divine, coupled with the close association of kingship with the heavenly realm, the use of tree imagery within certain expressions of Neo-Assyrian royal ideology is not unusual. Indeed, similar conceptual configurations are reflected in biblical traditions in which kingship and tree imagery are closely related<sup>(68)</sup>; remarkably, some of these texts are suggestive of a mortuary context for this correlation of kingship and trees<sup>(69)</sup>.

#### 4. *The Garden of Uzza as a mortuary garden*

In Isa 65,3-5, 66,17 and perhaps 1,29-30, faint reflections of the sacred status of mortuary gardens may be discerned. Their function as

<sup>(66)</sup> “An Assyrian Garden of Ancestors”, 148-149.

<sup>(67)</sup> See, for example, *Tree, Kings and Politics: Studies in Assyrian Iconography* (ed. B.N. PORTER) (OBO 197; Fribourg – Göttingen 2003); G. WIDENGREN, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religions* (Uppsala – Wiesbaden 1951).

<sup>(68)</sup> E.g., Num 24,6-7; Judg 6,9; 9,8-15; 1 Sam 22,6; Isa 6,13; 11,1.10; Ezek 17,3-10; 28,12-19; 31,2-18; Dan 4,10-33.

<sup>(69)</sup> For example, the bones of King Saul and his heirs are buried beneath a tree (1 Sam 31,13; 1 Chr 10,12; cf. Gen 35,8) and in Ezek 31,14-18, kings imaged as trees are felled and consigned to Sheol. I will be exploring in a future publication the possibility that sacred trees played a role within ancestral cults of kingship in Judah.

cult places for the veneration of possibly royal dead ancestors finds notable support in textual and archaeological evidence from the royal palace at Ugarit, and iconographical material from the Neo-Assyrian Northwest Palace at Kalḫu. In returning to the point at which this discussion began, it would thus appear that the biblical burial of kings Manasseh and Amon in a garden (2 Kgs 21,18.26) resonates with a greater religious and cultic importance than has been previously discerned. Consequently, the widespread assumption that a garden burial reflects a secondary or alternative funerary site is mistaken. Instead, it would appear that the association of royal tombs with a garden is most appropriate. However, this highlights an intriguing irony. In spite of the historical credibility of the garden burial of royalty, and despite the probable religious and ideological prestige of this form of interment, the garden burials of Manasseh and Amon function in the books of Kings as a symbol of theological castigation; in deviating from his formulaic references to the City of David as the site of the royal tombs, the biblical narrator segregates these most reprehensible of kings from their Davidic ancestors. Though this may find partial explanation in the condemnation of mortuary gardens and their associated practices in the book of Isaiah, it is interesting to note that this deviation is heightened by the double-designation of Manasseh's burial site in 2 Kgs 21,18, in which the king is interred בגן ביתו בגן עוזא, "in the garden of his house in the Garden of Uzza". Whilst a consensus view is yet to emerge concerning the intended significance or likely identity of Uzza, the pronounced naming of the mortuary garden appears to function as an ideological strategy designed to distance it even further from the royal ancestral tombs by setting up an implicit contrast between גן עוזא, "Garden of Uzza" and עיר דוד, "City of David". The continued success of this strategy is reflected in several scholarly discussions in which the mortuary garden is geographically distanced from the City of David on the assumption that the garden lay beyond the walls of Jerusalem.

Moreover, the veracity of the tradition naming the burial site as the "Garden of Uzza" appears uncertain upon closer examination. It was noted at the outset of this discussion that the Chronicler does not include this designation in his description of the burial place of Manasseh (2 Chr 33,20)<sup>(70)</sup>, but instead refers only to Manasseh's

<sup>(70)</sup> Recall that the site of Amon's burial is not mentioned by the Chronicler (2 Chr 33,24-25).

interment “in his house” (בֵּיתוֹ). It has also been observed that the negative connotations of גֶּן עֵזָא have probably played a part in traditions assigning Jehoiakim’s grave to the κηπῶ Οὔζα, “garden of Oza” (4 Kgdms Lucianic 24,6) or Γανοζα, “Ganoza” (2 Par 36,8). Whether ideologically shaped or not, it would appear that reference to גֶּן עֵזָא is a variable component of ancient traditions concerning the burial places of the Judahite kings. In turning to Josephus’ accounts of the reigns of the kings, it is interesting to notice that reference to the Garden of Uzza is also absent. Rather, Manasseh is said to have been buried “in his own gardens” (*Ant* X,46), as indeed is another Judahite monarch, Uzziah (*Ant* IX,227)<sup>(71)</sup>. Josephus’ paralleled portrayals of the burials of Manasseh and Uzziah is suggestive of a tradition in which the resting places of the two kings were closely aligned. This is probably to be related to the claim in 2 Chr 26,23 that upon his death, the diseased Uzziah was buried *עִם אֲבוֹתָיו בְּשָׂדֵה הַקְּבֻרָה אֲשֶׁר לַמְּלָכִים*, “with his ancestors in the burial field belonging to the kings”<sup>(72)</sup>, a claim contrasting with that found in 2 Kgs 15,5-7, in which it is asserted that he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. The Chronicler is explicit in associating Uzziah’s burial in a field with the disease afflicting the king during his lifetime, for which he was separated from the royal household (2 Chr 26,21.23; cf. 2 Kgs 15,5). Thus his interment in a burial field is portrayed as an ignominious end to his reign<sup>(73)</sup>, much as burial in the Garden of Uzza is indicative of the condemnation of Manasseh and Amon in 2 Kgs 21,18.26.

In view of these observations, it may be tempting to associate the tradition of Uzziah’s field burial in 2 Chr 26,23 with that in which Manasseh and Amon’s mortuary garden is designated the “Garden of Uzza” in 2 Kgs 21,18.26. Whilst this finds some support in the

(71) Josephus employs different terms in referring to these gardens: κήποις (*Ant* IX,227) and παραδείσους (*Ant* X,46). This might reflect differing designations for the burial sites in the traditions upon which Josephus drew, as possibly reflected in the biblical use of גֶּן for Manasseh’s burial place (2 Kgs 21,18) and שָׂדֵה for that of Uzziah (2 Chr 26,23).

(72) This verse seems to have proved problematic for some of its ancient tradents, for it appears to have been theologically smoothed: the royal burial field is distinguished from the tombs of Uzziah’s predecessors by the omission of any reference to his burial “with his ancestors” (Syr.; Vulg.) and by the apparent addition of a gloss emphasizing that the king was not interred in the royal tombs (Syr.). The tradition of Uzziah’s burial in a field may have generated the claim in 2 Chr 26,10 that he sponsored farms and vineyards because “he loved the soil”.

(73) Cf. 2 Kgs 23,6.

possibility that the name Uzza (עֶזָא) may be a variant of Uzziah (עֶזִּיָּה), it may be further encouraged by the *absence* of the label גֶּן עֶזָא in the Chronicler's royal burial notices, in notable contrast to the presence of his unique material concerning Uzziah's field burial. Admittedly, there is no need for the Chronicler to consign Manasseh to an overtly dishonourable grave, for he is a repentant cult reformer in this story<sup>(74)</sup>. Indeed, the Chronicler simply asserts in 2 Chr 33,20 that Manasseh was buried "in his house" (בֵּיתוֹ). Yet both the Septuagint and Syriac versions of this verse claim that Manasseh was buried in a garden; the former identifies it as "the garden of his house", whilst the latter asserts that Manasseh was interred "in his house in the garden of treasure". These complex and seemingly contradictory textual traditions allow for the tentative speculation that the double-designation of Manasseh's burial place in 2 Kgs 21,18 (וַיִּקְבֹּר בֶּן בֵּיתוֹ בֶּן עֶזָא) may be the work of a glossator: perhaps a textual tradition locating Manasseh's tomb in גֶּן בֵּיתוֹ was embellished with the secondary designation גֶּן עֶזָא, a label deriving from a tradition describing Uzziah's interment in a royal burial field.

Be this as it may, the variations among the royal burial notices in MT and the Versions suggest that the designation of the royal mortuary garden as the "Garden of Uzza" is not a stable feature of the traditions concerning the burial places of the kings of Judah. Yet commentators have tended to depend upon it as a reliable and key historical detail by which the problematic inconsistencies of the royal burial notices in the books of Kings might be explained. As a result, the religious significance of a royal garden burial has not received due attention. In contrast, this discussion has sought to argue that the Hebrew Bible offers glimpses of the important role of mortuary gardens within the religious heritage of the biblical writers. Indeed, it is interesting to observe that the motif of a royal mortuary garden might be detected in further traditions. In 2 Kgs 9,27, King Ahaziah of Judah flees in fear of his life to a place named Beth-haggan (בֵּית הַגֶּן), a name literally meaning, "the house of the garden", and which is reminiscent of the designation of Manasseh's resting place in 2 Kgs 21,18 as גֶּן בֵּיתוֹ. This might have been considered an appropriate place to seek ancestral protection from the murderous, king-killing Jehu<sup>(75)</sup>. A later example

<sup>(74)</sup> On the Chronicler's portrayal of Manasseh and his reign, see STAVRAKOPOULOU, *King Manasseh*, 46-59.

<sup>(75)</sup> Cf. STARODOUB-SCHARR, "The Royal Garden", 262\*, n. 36. Wiseman (*I & 2 Kings*, 222) associates Beth-haggan with royal gardens at Jezreel, rather than

might be found in the New Testament. In the gospel of John, it is claimed that Jesus' body was laid in a garden tomb (19,41), and that Mary mistook the resurrected Jesus for a gardener (20,15). It seems likely that the motif of a royal mortuary garden has re-emerged within this tradition<sup>(76)</sup>. As it is now found, the motif of a mortuary garden is presented negatively in the Hebrew Bible. Just as many other formerly acceptable cult practices are rejected and censured by the biblical writers, so the mortuary garden cult of ancient Judahite kingship has been cast into the shadows. Thus in Isa 65,3-5; 66,17 and perhaps 1,29-30, the mortuary garden is characterised as an illegitimate and abhorrent cult place despised by YHWH, whilst in 2 Kgs 21,18.26, the garden burials of the Judahite kings Manasseh and Amon illustrate the theological condemnation wrought by their supposed religious depravity. Yet ironically, it would appear that each of these kings has been accorded an historically honourable burial, wholly befitting an ancient Near Eastern monarch.

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## SUMMARY

The Garden of Uzza (2 Kgs 21,18,26) is commonly regarded as a pleasure garden in or near Jerusalem which came to be used as a royal burial ground once the tombs in the City of David had become full. However, in this article it is argued that the religious and cultic significance of royal garden burials has been widely overlooked. In drawing upon comparative evidence from the ancient Near East, it is proposed that mortuary gardens played an ideological role within perceptions of Judahite kingship. Biblical texts such as Isa 65,3-4; 66,17 and perhaps 1,29-30 refer not to goddess worship, but to practices and sacred sites devoted to the royal dead.

its more usual identification with En-gannim (Josh 19,21; 21,29). Certainly, the preceding description of Joram's corpse being dumped on Naboth's plot of ground (2 Kgs 9,25-26; cf. 1 Kgs 21) is suggestive of a complex of traditions concerning royal gardens, death and ancestral land.

(<sup>76</sup>) See also WYATT, “‘Supposing Him to be the Gardener’ (John 20,15)”, 21-38.

## **L'apport de la recherche historique et ses limites pour la compréhension des visions nocturnes de Zacharie<sup>(1)</sup>**

Une des visées de l'approche historico-critique est d'éclairer les textes bibliques par l'histoire et, réciproquement, de nourrir cette histoire par les informations que l'exégète s'efforce d'extraire de ces mêmes textes. Lorsque ces informations ne sont pas corroborées par des données extérieures fiables, il est difficile d'échapper à une démonstration circulaire. Il s'avère, en outre, que les textes bibliques, par leur nature même, résistent le plus souvent à une lecture trop immédiatement "historicisante". Soit, pour les textes pré-exiliques, à cause de l'incessant travail de relecture et de réactualisation dont ils ont fait l'objet, soit, pour les textes plus récents, à cause de ce qui semble être une sorte de brouillage volontaire ou "tactique"<sup>(2)</sup> par leurs rédacteurs.

Le propos de cet article est de mettre en relief les écueils sur lesquels butent les interprétations "historicisantes" des visions nocturnes de Zacharie (Za 1,7–6,8\*). Nous rappellerons d'abord comment les exégètes ont perçu ou perçoivent l'insertion des visions de Zacharie dans l'histoire (I). Nous jetterons ensuite un regard critique sur le contenu des visions pour vérifier si la situation historique proposée comme clef de lecture est réellement conforme aux données des textes (II). Une conclusion suggèrera quelques pistes possibles pour une approche peut-être plus appropriée de ce cycle visionnaire.

Qu'entendons-nous par visions nocturnes de Zacharie? Sans pouvoir dérouler ici tout l'argumentaire exégétique (essentiellement celui de la critique littéraire et du genre littéraire), il nous semble, avec un bon nombre d'exégètes, que les visions de Zacharie forment un cycle cohérent de sept visions<sup>(3)</sup>. Cette cohérence ressort bien de

<sup>(1)</sup> Thème d'un atelier proposé au 21<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'Association Catholique Française pour l'Étude de la Bible (ACFEB), le mardi 30 août 2005, à Issy-les-Moulineaux.

<sup>(2)</sup> G. STEINER parle de "difficulté tactique" du texte; cf. son *On Difficulty and Other Essays* (Oxford 1978) 18-47. Voir aussi les réflexions pertinentes de H. S. PYPHER, "Reading in the Dark: Zechariah, Daniel and the Difficulty of Scripture", *JSOT* 29 (2005) 485-504.

<sup>(3)</sup> Sur ces visions, cf. les commentaires et monographies mentionnés dans la riche bibliographie de M.J. BODA, *Haggai & Zechariah Research. A Bibliographical Survey* (Leiden 2003).



l'organisation globale des visions<sup>(4)</sup>. La première (1,8-15) et la septième (6,1-8) se correspondent. Elles sont toutes deux localisées aux bornes du monde<sup>(5)</sup>, avec des chevaux et des personnages qui se tiennent devant le Seigneur de toute la terre. L'une a lieu au début de la nuit, l'autre à l'aube<sup>(6)</sup>. Dans la première, les cavaliers viennent de parcourir la terre, dans la dernière ils sont envoyés pour la parcourir avec une nouvelle mission. La deuxième vision (2,1-4) correspond à la sixième (5,5-11). Toutes deux se déroulent en deux étapes. Dans l'une, il s'agit du danger extérieur à la nation, les cornes qui ont dispersé Juda, cornes que des forgerons vont expulser<sup>(7)</sup> vers l'extérieur. Dans l'autre, il s'agit du danger intérieur à la nation: la méchanceté ou injustice est enfermée à l'intérieur d'un épha puis, deuxième scène, emmenée par deux femmes à l'extérieur du territoire, dans le pays de Shinéar d'où s'étaient manifestées les cornes contre Juda<sup>(8)</sup>. La troisième vision (2,5-9) et la cinquième (5,1-4) se correspondent également. Dans l'une comme dans l'autre il est question de mesures, de largeur et de longueur<sup>(9)</sup>. Elles se concluent toutes deux par un oracle divin qui mentionne dans l'une un feu protecteur, dans l'autre une imprécation qui consume la maison avec ses poutres et ses pierres. Le regard est passé de l'univers au pays, puis, du pays à la ville. Avec la quatrième vision, vision pivot (4,1-6αα et 10αβ-14), on se trouve maintenant au cœur de Jérusalem, mais, comme dans les première et septième, confronté à la présence divine, présence glorieuse signalée par les quarante neuf flammes du chandelier, avec deux personnages "qui se tiennent devant le Seigneur de toute la terre", "les deux fils de l'huile". Les personnages des

<sup>(4)</sup> Cf., en particulier, Fr. SMITH-FLORENTIN, "L'espace d'un chandelier: Zacharie 1,8-6,15", *Le livre de traverse*. De l'exégèse biblique à l'anthropologie (éd. Fr. SMITH-FLORENTIN – O. ABEL) (Paris 1992) 281-290.

<sup>(5)</sup> Le sens de Za 1,8 est controversé. Nous proposons: "quelqu'un monté sur un cheval roux, alors que Lui [YHWH] se tenait entre les myrtes qui (sont) dans les profondeurs abyssales". La porte du ciel est située à l'endroit où se rejoignent les eaux des profondeurs abyssales et les eaux célestes. Les deux montagnes d'airain (6,1) sont également une représentation mythique de l'entrée du ciel où les montagnes forment une sorte de porte par laquelle se lève le soleil.

<sup>(6)</sup> Cf. par exemple, S. AMSLER, *Aggée, Zacharie, Malachie* (CAT XIc; Genève 1998) 103.

<sup>(7)</sup> Le sens du verbe יָדָה I (Za 2,4) n'est pas tout à fait assuré. L'ougaritique connaît une racine *ydy* au sens de "chasser, renvoyer, expulser".

<sup>(8)</sup> Sur l'identification des cornes avec Babylone, cf. plus bas.

<sup>(9)</sup> Avec une inversion caractéristique: longueur-largeur, puis largeur-longueur.

première et septième visions parcouraient la terre, ici ce sont les yeux de YHWH qui circulent sur toute la terre.

Cette présentation présuppose, avec la majorité des exégètes (mais il va sans dire que les vues divergentes sont aussi assez nombreuses)<sup>(10)</sup>, deux choses. Premièrement, que ne font pas partie du cycle des visions nocturnes proprement dit les deux oracles de 2,10-17<sup>(11)</sup>, la vision de l'investiture du grand prêtre Josué en 3,1-10<sup>(12)</sup>, les oracles à Zorobabel insérés dans la quatrième vision (4,6aβ-10aα)<sup>(13)</sup>, le v. 12 de

<sup>(10)</sup> Une des tendances de la recherche est de proposer une interprétation dite "holistic" qui résiste à des opérations de critique littéraire (au sens technique du terme dans l'exégèse critique) et ne prend comme base de lecture que la forme finale des textes. Ainsi B. TIDIMAN, *Le livre de Zacharie* (CEB; Vaux-sur-Seine 1996). Il va sans dire que la forme finale des textes n'est pas arbitraire et répond à un savant agencement. Faire l'impasse sur la critique littéraire ne conduit cependant pas nécessairement à une lecture plus attentive aux textes.

<sup>(11)</sup> Le rappel des exilés (2,10-13 et 14-17). Sur ces oracles, cf. A. PETITJEAN, *Les oracles du Proto-Zacharie*. Un programme de restauration pour la communauté juive après l'exil (EB; Paris 1969) 94-160.

<sup>(12)</sup> Sur ce passage et sa relation (secondaire) au cycle des visions, cf. récemment M.J. BODA, "Oil, Crowns and Thrones: Prophet, Priest and King in Zechariah 1,7-6,15", *Currents in Biblical and Theological Dialogue* (éd. J.K. STAFFORD) (Winnipeg 2002) 89-106; Th. POLA, "Form and Meaning in Zechariah 3", *Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (éd. B. BECKING – R. ALBERTZ) (Assen 2003) 156-167; et Id., *Das Priestertum bei Sacharja* (FAT 35; Tübingen 2003) 173-223.

<sup>(13)</sup> J. WELLHAUSEN, *Die kleinen Propheten übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin 1898) 183, a relevé qu'il s'agissait d'une insertion. Les arguments sont clairs. Le lecteur s'attend au v. 6a à l'interprétation que l'ange-interprète va donner du chandelier. Cette-ci est en effet introduite par "il reprit et me dit en ces termes", mais au lieu du discours direct, le texte se poursuit par une introduction d'un autre type: "Telle est la parole de YHWH à l'intention de Zorobabel". Une incongruité correspondante s'observe au v. 10, à la fin du troisième oracle adressé à Zorobabel. "Ces sept-là sont les yeux de YHWH" n'a aucun lien sémantique avec ce qui précède. La solution à cette rupture du fil narratif la plus évidente est de rejoindre v. 6aα à 10aβ: "Il reprit et me dit en ces termes: "Ces sept-là sont les yeux de YHWH"". On pourrait comprendre la subdivision de ce v. 10 par les Massorètes ainsi: "Car qui voudrait mépriser le jour des petites choses, alors qu'ils voient avec joie la pierre d'étain dans la main de Zorobabel, ces sept-là", mais on notera que la place du sujet à la toute fin de cette phrase n'est pas ordinaire. La deuxième partie du verset est aussi syntactiquement problématique: "les yeux de YHWH, ils circulent sur toute la terre". R. HANHART, *Sacharja* (BK XIV/7:1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1998) 271-275, reprend un argument ancien: les vv. 6-10\* sont un intermezzo nécessaire pour passer de la vision (v. 2-3) à l'explication (v. 10-14). A. FOURNIER-BIDOZ, "Des mains de Zorobabel aux yeux du Seigneur: Pour une lecture unitaire de Zacharie IV 1-14", *VT* 47 (1997) 537-542, étudie soigneusement la structure d'ensemble du chapitre et décrit la

cette même vision<sup>(14)</sup>, et le complément oraculaire à la première vision introduit par לָכֵן en 1,16-17<sup>(15)</sup>. Deuxièmement, qu'il manque de critères réellement convaincants pour permettre de reconstruire une phase antérieure au cycle des visions tel que nous l'avons défini<sup>(16)</sup>.

Il va sans dire que ce présupposé littéraire sur le cycle original des visions nocturnes, présupposé qui me semble exégétiquement défendable (il n'a en fait rien d'original)<sup>(17)</sup>, a des incidences directes sur notre sujet: le lien entre les visions et des événements repérables dans l'histoire. C'est, en effet, dans les passages considérés ici comme étrangers au cycle primitif ou du moins qui lui sont secondaires (1,16-17; 3,1-10; 4,6aβ - 10aα, auquel il faut ajouter 6,9-15, le couronnement prophétique de Josué) que se trouvent des données concrètes qui permettent un véritable ancrage historique de ces chapitres: ainsi les noms de Zorobabel et de Josué, la fonction de grand prêtre, la reconstruction du temple.

## I. Les événements historiques invoqués pour la compréhension des visions nocturnes

### 1. La deuxième année de Darius (1,7)

La première vision (celle des chevaux — et sans doute, au niveau rédactionnel, l'ensemble qui va jusqu'à la fin du ch. 6)<sup>(18)</sup> est précédée

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symétrie frappante entre les explications des v. 5-10 et 11-14. Cette structure vaut d'ailleurs aussi sans l'insertion des oracles à Zorobabel. Les observations de l'auteur sont précieuses pour comprendre la forme finale du texte (ainsi le jeu dans l'emploi des verbes רָאָה et יָדַע). Cf. POLA, *Priestertum*, 67-71.

<sup>(14)</sup> Cf. la justification plus bas.

<sup>(15)</sup> Sur ce point cf. plus bas.

<sup>(16)</sup> Les tentatives de H.-G. SCHÖTTLER, *Gott inmitten seines Volkes. Die Neuordnung des Gottesvolkes nach Sacharja 1–6* (TTZ 43; Trier 1987), et de Chr. UEHLINGER, "Figurative Policy, Propaganda and Prophecy", *Congress Volume Cambridge 1995* (éd. J.A. Emerton) (VTS 66; Leiden 1997) 297-349, sont fort intéressantes, mais ne semblent pas atteindre un degré suffisant de probabilité à cause du cumul d'hypothèses qu'elles engagent.

<sup>(17)</sup> C'est le consensus, par exemple, entre Chr. JEREMIAS, *Die Nachtgesichte des Sacharja. Untersuchungen zur ihrer Stellung im Zusammenhang der Visionsberichte im Alten Testament und zu ihrem Bildmaterial* (FRLANT 117; Göttingen 1977), H. GRAF REVENTLOW, *Die Propheten Haggai, Sacharja und Maleachi* (ATD 25.2; Göttingen 1993), et POLA, *Priestertum*. M.J. BODA, *Haggai / Zechariah* (NICAV; Grand Rapids 2004) retient toutefois 1,17-18 comme faisant partie intégrante de la première vision.

<sup>(18)</sup> La date suivante ne se trouve qu'en 7,1.

en 1,7 par une donnée chronologique très précise: “Le vingt-quatrième jour du onzième mois (c’est le mois de Shebath), l’an deux de Darius, la parole de YHWH advint à Zacharie, le fils de Bérékia, le fils d’Iddô, le prophète, en ces termes”. La date devrait correspondre au 15 février 519<sup>(19)</sup>. Comme, dans la deuxième partie du verset, il est question de Zacharie à la troisième personne et que, de toute évidence, la formulation stéréotypée (“la parole de YHWH advint à Zacharie ... en ces termes”) correspond plus à une introduction d’oracles prophétiques qu’à celle d’un cycle autobiographique de visions, ce verset ne peut guère être l’introduction primitive du cycle. Toutefois les rédacteurs ont peut-être utilisé pour la première partie du verset une donnée qui était celle de l’introduction d’origine du cycle des visions. Sauf quelques exceptions, cette date est généralement acceptée comme fiable<sup>(20)</sup>. Certains s’étonnent toutefois qu’on ne trouve pas, dans le cycle, d’allusion claire aux événements qui se sont déroulés depuis 539, date de la chute de Babylone, en particulier aucune allusion à l’édit de Cyrus qui permettait, dès 538, la reconstruction du temple. La deuxième vision (2,1-4) laisse entendre que les cornes qui ont dispersé Juda (il ne peut s’agir que des Babyloniens)<sup>(21)</sup> vont bientôt être abattues et expulsées par des forgerons (donc, elles ne l’ont pas encore été). Dans la sixième vision (5,5-11), la méchanceté ou l’injustice (probablement une statue emblématique d’un culte idolâtrique)<sup>(22)</sup> est expulsée vers le pays de Shinéar, autre nom pour Babylone. Dans la septième vision (6,1-8), des chevaux noirs sortent vers le territoire du nord pour y déposer le “souffle”, très probablement la colère divine<sup>(23)</sup>, comme

<sup>(19)</sup> Cf. POLA, *Priestertum*, 39-43.

<sup>(20)</sup> Ainsi, par ex., par GRAF REVENTLOW, *Die Propheten*, 39, qui considère la date de 1,7 comme rédactionnelle mais comme conforme à la réalité historique.

<sup>(21)</sup> D’autres interprétations ont été proposées. À l’instar des récits de Daniel, l’interprétation traditionnelle rapproche les quatre cornes des quatre empires qui se sont succédés au cours de l’histoire (Assyriens, Babyloniens, Perses, auxquels on ajoute soit les Égyptiens soit les Macédoniens). Ou alors, quatre est compris dans un sens très général: l’ensemble des nations, grandes et petites, qui ont manifesté leur hostilité au peuple de YHWH. K. GALLING, “Die Exilswende in der Sicht des Propheten Sacharja” [1952], *Id.*, *Studien zur Geschichte Israels im persischen Zeitalter* (Tübingen 1964) 109-126, pense que la genèse des visions s’étend sur une période qui commence avant 539.

<sup>(22)</sup> Cf. Chr. UEHLINGER, “Die Frau im Efa (Sach 5,5-11). Eine Programmvision von der Abschiebung der Göttin”, *BK* 49 (1994) 93-103.

<sup>(23)</sup> BODA, *Haggai / Zechariah*, 323-324, rappelle que le souffle est clairement l’agent de la colère divine en Jr 49,36-47; Jg 8,3; Pr 16,32; 29,11; Ez 16,42 et 24,13.

tend à le prouver l'expression correspondante à la fin de la première vision (1,8-15: "d'une grande colère je suis en colère contre les nations insouciantes"). Enfin, dans cette première vision, nous entendons la supplique adressée au Seigneur de toute la terre: "YHWH des Armées, jusques à quand n'auras-tu pas de compassion pour Jérusalem et pour les villes de Juda contre lesquelles tu es irrité voilà soixante-dix ans?" (1,12)<sup>(24)</sup>. C'est donc que la captivité n'est pas terminée. Comment concilier ce contenu avec l'année 519, vingt ans après l'entrée triomphale de Cyrus à Babylone?

Tout récemment, Mark J. Boda a proposé une solution historiquement possible<sup>(25)</sup>. Cyrus est entré dans Babylone sans la détruire et, finalement, du moins selon la propagande officielle<sup>(26)</sup> qui accentue davantage la continuité avec le passé glorieux de Babylone que la rupture, en pacificateur<sup>(27)</sup>. Il faudra attendre le règne de Darius pour que Babylone soit sévèrement punie suite à ses rébellions contre le pouvoir perse du début 522 à fin 521<sup>(28)</sup>. L'inscription de Behistoun (décembre 521) nous apprend que Nidintu-Bêl de Babylone fut empalé, lui et quarante-neuf hommes de sa suite<sup>(29)</sup>. Ensuite ce fut Arkha/Araka et 2.497 de ses "supporters" qui furent empalés à Babylone<sup>(30)</sup>. Hérodote ajoute que "Darius, Maître de la ville, en fit abattre les remparts et enlever toutes les portes..."<sup>(31)</sup>. Les révoltes avaient montré la fragilité de l'organisation de l'Empire perse et

(24) Sur ces 70 ans, cf. Jr 25,11-12; 29,1-10; 2 Ch 36,21 et Dn 9,1. Si la date est précise, on peut penser à 609-539 (en calculant à partir de la chute de Babylone) ou 587-517 (en calculant à partir de la destruction de Jérusalem). Cf. récemment M. LEUCHTER, "Jeremiah's 70-Year Prophecy and the ששך/לב קבי Atbash Codes", *Bib* 85 (2004) 503-522.

(25) "Terrifying the Horns: Persia and Babylon in Zechariah 1:7-6:15", *CBQ* 67 (2005) 22-41, spéc. 24-26.

(26) Cf. le fameux *Cylindre* de Cyrus, et P. BRIANT, *Histoire de l'Empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre* (Paris 1996) 50-55.

(27) Cette lecture est confirmée par les recherches de BRIANT, *Histoire*, 50-55 et 82, et de M.A. DANDAMAEV, *Iranians in Achaemenid Babylonia* (Costa Mesa 1992) 3, cité par BODA, "Terrifying", 37: "Après la conquête perse, Cyrus II a permis au royaume babylonien de continuer à exister comme une entité nominelle, avec ses méthodes traditionnelles d'administration et ses institutions sociales".

(28) D'abord en réaction aux pressions exercées par l'impôt énorme levé par Cambyse pour la construction d'une flotte et pour l'expédition contre l'Égypte. Ensuite dans le désir de retrouver leur autonomie politique.

(29) *Inscription de Behistoun* § 19, cf. BRIANT, *Histoire*, 119-150, 135.

(30) *Inscription de Behistoun* § 49-51, cf. BRIANT, *Histoire*, ibidem.

(31) *Enquête* III, § 159. L'information n'est pas forcément exacte.

Darius va y remédier en la réorganisant politiquement, particulièrement dans la région de Transeuphratène<sup>(32)</sup>. Ainsi le prophète verrait la fin de la colère de Dieu, voire la réalisation des oracles de jugement contre Babylone, et la fin des 70 ans d'oppression à l'époque où Darius venait de mater sévèrement les Babyloniens. Explication ingénieuse et pourtant, il nous semble, loin des données explicites dans le texte des visions nocturnes. Si ce *background* historique était nécessaire à l'intelligence de ces visions, ne serait-il pas abordé plus explicitement? Il me paraît plus sage d'admettre le caractère clairement rédactionnel du verset Za 1,7. La chronologie de Zacharie ne serait-elle pas plutôt tout simplement empruntée à celle du livre d'Aggée<sup>(33)</sup>?

## 2. Les révoltes lors de la succession de Cambyse

L'explication de Boda que nous venons d'évoquer présuppose que le prophète avait pour le moins plus de sympathie pour les Perses que pour les Babyloniens<sup>(34)</sup>. Jusqu'à présent la tendance des chercheurs a été plutôt de voir en Aggée et Zacharie des propagandistes d'une révolte contre les Perses aux côtés des Babyloniens<sup>(35)</sup>. Aggée appellerait en 2,20-23 à une révolte ouverte en faveur de Zorobabel ("Je ferai trembler le ciel et la terre, etc"). Quant au prophète Zacharie, enhardi par la révolte de Nindutu-Bêl et, éventuellement, en intelligence avec ce dernier, il aurait couronné Zorobabel comme roi, restaurant ainsi l'indépendance politique de Juda. Cette interprétation repose surtout sur l'exégèse du texte de Za 6,9-15, texte réajusté pour la cause<sup>(36)</sup>. Les objections purement historiques à cette reconstruction

<sup>(32)</sup> Cf. BODA, "Terrifying", 39, avec une abondante bibliographie dans la note 65.

<sup>(33)</sup> Ainsi J. NOGALSKI, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 217; Berlin 1993) 216 et 238.

<sup>(34)</sup> C'est déjà la position de P.R. ACKROYD, *Exile and Restoration. A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century BC* (OTL; London 1968) 37-38.

<sup>(35)</sup> Cf., entre autres, A.T.E. OLMSTEAD, "Darius and His Behistoun Inscription", *AJS* 55 (1938) 392-416, et L. WATERMAN, "The Camouflaged Purge of Three Messianic Conspirators", *JNES* 13 (1954) 73-78. Cette conception des événements remonte en fait aux travaux de B. STADE, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Berlin 1888) II/1, 113, et E. MEYER, *Geschichte des Altertums* (Stuttgart – Berlin 1901) III.

<sup>(36)</sup> Par pure conjecture, on remplace alors, au v. 12, "sur la tête de Josué" (TM) par "sur le tête de Zorobabel, le fils de Shealtiel" ou encore "sur la tête de Zorobabel et sur la tête de Josué".

des événements, si répandue encore aujourd'hui comme clef de lecture des visions nocturnes, sont nombreuses. Si on accepte la date de février 519 (1,7), on voit mal comment les Judéens ne seraient pas encore au courant de ce que les révoltes ont été sévèrement matées. La stèle ou plutôt le relief officiel de Behistun qui en parle date déjà de décembre 521. Pour maintenir l'hypothèse d'un contexte de révolte nationale à la base des visions, certains proposent alors différentes solutions: soit considérer la date de février 519 comme secondaire<sup>(37)</sup>, soit pré-dater l'accession au trône de Darius<sup>(38)</sup>, soit encore faire commencer le ministère de Zacharie, dont la première vision (1,7-15) possède en effet certains traits d'un récit de vocation, en 522 à Babylone<sup>(39)</sup>, soit, enfin, prendre en considération des révoltes qui ont eu lieu après la deuxième année de Darius, jusqu'en 519, postérieures donc au relief de Behistun<sup>(40)</sup>. Mais pourquoi cet acharnement à rechercher l'arrière-plan de ces visions dans un contexte de révoltes alors que les cavaliers qui ont parcouru toute la terre communiquent au Seigneur de toute la terre: "Toute la terre (est) en repos et tranquille" (1,11b)?

### 3. *Les conflits internes à la communauté judéenne*

À ce contexte présumé de révoltes contre l'empire perse est généralement associé ou superposé un contexte de conflits internes à la communauté judéenne, conflits dont les historiens sont particulièrement friands comme clefs de lecture: conflits entre gens du pays et rapatriés à Jérusalem ou encore entre visionnaires et hiéocrates<sup>(41)</sup>. Qu'il ait existé des conflits d'intérêts et des tensions dans la société

<sup>(37)</sup> Ainsi OLMSTEAD, "Darius".

<sup>(38)</sup> Ainsi WATERMAN, "Camouflages", et E.J. BICKERMANN, "En marge de l'Écriture. II: La seconde année de Darius", *RB* 88 (1981) 23-28. Un roi qui s'impose par la force n'accepte pas les années de règne de son prédécesseur "illégitime".

<sup>(39)</sup> Ainsi GALLING, "Exilswende"; PETITJEAN, *Oracles*; L.A. SINCLAIR, "Redaction of Zechariah 1-8", *BR* 20 (1975) 36-47; P.L. REDDITT, "Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the Night Visions of Zechariah", *CBQ* 54 (1992) 249-259.

<sup>(40)</sup> R. ALBERTZ, *Religionsgeschichte Israels in alttestamentlicher Zeit* (ATD ErgR 8/2; Göttingen 1992) II, 479.

<sup>(41)</sup> À la suite d'O. PLÖGER, *Theokratie und Eschatologie* (WMANT 2; Göttingen 1959, <sup>1</sup>1968), et de P.D. HANSON, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic. The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia 1975, <sup>2</sup>1979). C'est une ironie que Hanson considère justement comme un hiéocrate l'auteur des visions nocturnes.



judéenne semble assez évident à partir de certains textes de l'époque post-exilique, mais transparaissent-ils dans le cycle des visions nocturnes<sup>(42)</sup>?

#### 4. *La disparition de Zorobabel*

Malgré les difficultés historiques et les trop fréquents arguments *e silentio*, de nombreux chercheurs s'obstinent à chercher la clef pour l'intelligence des visions nocturnes dans un contexte de révolte nationale contre l'impérialisme perse à cause d'une donnée délicate à interpréter, celle du silence des textes sur le devenir de Zorobabel, silence interprété comme disparition brutale de Zorobabel de la scène politique. Sa mission semble achevée en 518. D'où l'hypothèse qu'il aurait été victime de l'effervescence messianique de 520 et qu'il aurait été exécuté par les autorités perses comme l'a été Aryandes en Égypte<sup>(43)</sup>. Cet échec de restauration du royaume davidique par Zorobabel aurait conduit à ce que d'aucun caractérise de "fiasco de la prophétie de salut"<sup>(44)</sup> et au transfert des prérogatives royales sur la personne du grand-prêtre Josué. Nous n'avons pas à nous étendre amplement sur cette reconstruction, d'une part, parce qu'elle dépend de l'interprétation de passages qui sont situés en dehors du cycle des visions nocturnes (les oracles à Zorobabel en 3,6b-10a, et le récit concernant la couronne en 6,9-15), d'autre part, parce que Thomas Pola, dans sa thèse d'habilitation, *Das Priestertum bei Sacharja* (2003), nous semble avoir sereinement et souverainement étudié la question et apporté une solution satisfaisante. Voilà un résumé de ses conclusions:

Le prince héritier davidique légitime, Zorobabel, a été chargé par les autorités perses du rapatriement d'une groupe important d'exilés avec les responsabilités organisatrices et politiques afférentes. Il est accompagné d'Aggée, qui a été témoin du premier temple, et du jeune Zacharie. Sa fonction n'est pas de reconstruire le temple, les "anciens de Juda" en sont les maîtres d'œuvre (Esd 5,4.9). Cependant, la question de la légitimité du nouveau temple se pose: il faut retrouver la

<sup>(42)</sup> Sur l'opposition à la thèse de HANSON, cf. les auteurs cités par J.M. BODA, "Majoring on the Minors: Recent Research on Haggai and Zechariah", *Currents in Biblical Research* 2 (2003), 33-68, 42-43.

<sup>(43)</sup> On sait que P. GRELOT, *Les poèmes du Serviteur*. De la lecture critique à l'herméneutique (LD 103, Paris 1981) 67-73, a fait de la figure royale de Zorobabel l'arrière-plan des poèmes du Serviteur souffrant dont És 53,9 dit la mise à mort.

<sup>(44)</sup> Ainsi ALBERTZ, *Religionsgeschichte*, 483-487.

Pierre de fondation, respecter les dimensions de l'ancien temple et surtout donner le double aval, divin et royal, à cette construction à l'instar du sanctuaire davidique, voire salomonien. C'est là qu'est octroyé à Zorobabel un rôle spécifique. L'aval divin est donné par les deux prophètes Aggée et Zacharie, la légitimation royale l'est par le parrainage du descendant légitime de David. C'est à ce dernier que revient donc la pose de la pierre fondatrice. Ainsi les prophètes n'annoncent en Zorobabel ni le restaurateur du grand royaume davidosalomonien ni le Messie eschatologique. Sa messianité, précise Pola, est "fonctionnelle", celle d'un prince "constructeur", elle n'est pas institutionnellement liée à sa personne. Cet élément de continuité indispensable pour la légitimation du nouveau temple ne doit pas occulter la discontinuité dans la conception de la royauté<sup>(45)</sup>: le palais (à l'époque exilique mitoyen du temple) n'est pas reconstruit, le renouveau n'est plus attendu du pouvoir politique mais de l'Esprit (Za 4,6)<sup>(46)</sup>. Ce qui entraîne une valorisation nouvelle du sacerdoce, aboutissement d'un processus qui a commencé à la fin de l'époque pré-exilique — contre l'hypothèse d'une transformation accidentelle. Il serait toutefois inadéquat de parler d'un transfert des fonctions royales au sacerdoce. Le grand-prêtre Josué n'est pas déclaré un nouveau Messie par Zacharie. La couronne avec laquelle le grand prêtre doit être couronné (Za 6,11 — sans changement du TM) ne lui est pas destinée personnellement. Elle doit être conservée dans le temple en vue de la réalisation d'une messianité eschatologique. Ainsi le Messie reste mystérieusement caché dans le temple, ce qui explique au moins en partie la piété à la fois cultuelle et messianique des psalmistes<sup>(47)</sup>.

Mais si, comme nous en sommes convaincu, cette interprétation exégétiquement fondée du rôle de Zorobabel et de Josué en liaison avec la reconstruction du temple rend bien compte des passages où ces trois thèmes s'entrelacent dans les livres d'Aggée et de Zacharie, quelle est sa pertinence pour la compréhension des textes qui font partie du cycle même des visions nocturnes? Ce cycle parle-t-il de la

<sup>(45)</sup> Sur cette transformation, cf. POLA, *Priestertum*, 31-38; aussi, entre autres, D. BODI, "Le prophète critique de la monarchie: le terme *nâsî*' chez Ezéchiel", *Prophètes et rois. Bible et Proche-Orient* (éd. A. LEMAIRE) (LD hors série; Paris 2001) 249-257.

<sup>(46)</sup> Et déjà Ez 11.

<sup>(47)</sup> Cf. par ex. le chant des pèlerins arrivant à Jérusalem: "Toi qui es notre bouclier, ô Dieu, vois ! / Regarde le visage de l'homme qui a reçu ton onction !" (Ps 84,10).

reconstruction du temple? Yest-il question de Zorobabel? Nous voulons le vérifier en privilégiant la vision de l'arpenteur et surtout la vision centrale, celle du chandelier (4,1-14\*), que Pola lui-même nous semble trop rapidement intégrer dans sa perception globale du ministère de Zorobabel comme "constructeur" du temple.

## II. Regard sur la vision de l'arpenteur (2,5-9) et sur la vision pivot du cycle des visions nocturnes (4,1-14\*)

### 1. La vision de l'arpenteur (Za 2,5-9). Y est-il question du temple?

La troisième vision (celle de l'arpenteur)<sup>(48)</sup>, comme son pendant, la cinquième (celle du rouleau volant), nous l'avons dit, est subdivisée en deux scènes suivies d'un oracle divin. Dans la première scène (2,5-6) apparaît un arpenteur qui vient prendre les dimensions de Jérusalem pour en déterminer les limites. On pense souvent au tracé des murailles qui l'entoureront. Les liens lexicaux avec Ez 48,15 conduisent plutôt à penser au dimensionnement de toute l'aire, de toute la superficie de ce qu'Ézéchiél appelle "la propriété de la ville" (45,6: אֶחָדָהּ הָעִיר). Cette superficie inclut aussi les pâturages<sup>(49)</sup>. Dans la deuxième scène (2,7-8), nous participons à un dialogue entre l'ange-interprète et un autre personnage céleste qui l'enjoint de courir vers l'arpenteur pour lui adresser un message concernant la configuration de la ville: "Jérusalem doit demeurer un terrain ouvert" (פְּרוּחָהּ, un pluriel d'extension qui signifie "ville sans muraille" [NBS], "pays non défendu, par opposition aux villes fortifiées" ([DHAB])). Cette formulation fait penser au plan maléfique de Gog, le prince de Rosh: "Je monterai à l'assaut contre un pays ouvert, j'attaquerai des hommes tranquilles, qui habitent en sécurité, qui habitent tous dans des villes sans murailles,

<sup>(48)</sup> Sur cette vision (Za 2,5-9), cf., récemment, J.M. VINCENT, "Von der feurigen Herrlichkeit JHWHs in Jerusalem. Eine Auslegung von Sach 2,5-9", ID., *Das Auge hört. Die Erfahrbarkeit Gottes im Alten Testament* (BThSt 34; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1998) 99-134; et H. DELKURT, "Sacharja und der Kult", *Verbindungslinien*. FS Werner H. Schmidt (éd. A. GRAUPNER – H. DELKURT – A.B. ERNST) (Neukirchen-Vluyn 2000) 27-39.

<sup>(49)</sup> La controverse au sujet de la reconstruction de la muraille date d'une époque ultérieure, celle de Néhémie. Cf., à ce sujet, ACKROYD, *Exile*, 179: "There appears to be no question here [en Za 2,5-9] of polemic against an attempt to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but simply a message of the nature of the new city, which will spread abroad in the land, protected by the presence of God himself"; plus récemment VINCENT, "Von der feurigen", 112-115; et DELKURT, "Sacharja", 112.

n'ayant ni verrous ni portes...” (Ez 38,11). La ville peut ici rester ouverte et libre (une connotation positive de פְּרוּחָה)<sup>(50)</sup> puisque les habitants n'ont plus à redouter d'attaques ennemies. Les forgerons auront abattu les cornes, annonçant la vision précédente (2,1-4). De plus, devenue extrêmement prospère, la ville va s'étendre “à cause de l'abondance d'êtres humains et d'animaux (qui vivront) en son sein” (2,8b)<sup>(51)</sup>. Ce message est appuyé par un oracle divin: “Mais moi, je serai pour elle — oracle de YHWH — une muraille de feu tout autour, et en tant que gloire je serai au milieu d'elle”. L'image de YHWH comme rempart de feu est unique (ce ואני אהיה־לה semble par ailleurs faire écho à Ex 3,14)<sup>(52)</sup>. On peut du moins penser à la colonne de feu qui éclairait et protégeait Israël dans la route du désert<sup>(53)</sup>. Le vocabulaire est surtout proche de celui de la vision de la gloire de YHWH en Ez 1: “tout autour” (סביב), “en son milieu” (בתוכה), et, surtout, le couple ou binôme “feu” (אש) et “gloire” (כבוד). Il nous semble que כבוד désigne ici l'être même de YHWH<sup>(54)</sup>, ou, mieux, “the visibly manifested presence of God”<sup>(55)</sup>. La présence de la gloire divine dont Ezéchiel attendait le retour (43,1-8) après en avoir décrit le départ (chs 8-11\*). Les rapprochements évidents avec les prophéties ézéchiéliennes<sup>(56)</sup> mettent en relief une différence sensible. Zacharie évoque la présence de la gloire au milieu de Jérusalem et ne parle pas

<sup>(50)</sup> Sur les connotations positives du terme, cf. L. BAUER, *Zeit des Zweiten Tempels – Zeit der Gerechtigkeit*. Zur sozio-ökonomischen Konzeption in Haggai-Sacharja-Maleachi-Korpus (BEATAJ 31; Frankfurt am Main 1992) 230-231; et H.M. NIEMANN, “Das Ende des Volkes der Perezitter. Über soziale Wandlungen Israels im Spiegel einer Begriffsgruppe”, ZAW 105 (1993) 233-257, 234.

<sup>(51)</sup> Un motif fréquent dans la littérature exilique (cf. Ez 36,11, qui est très proche dans la formulation, ainsi que Ez 49,19b-20; 52,2; 54,2-4).

<sup>(52)</sup> Cf. C.L. MEYERS – E.M. MEYERS, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8* (AB 35B; Garden City, NY 1987) 156.

<sup>(53)</sup> Cf. Ex 13,21-23; 14,20; thème repris en Ez 4,2-6. JEREMIAS, *Nachtgesichte*, 174-175, et GRAF REVENTLOW, *Die Propheten*, 47, pensent plutôt à l'antique tradition de Sion (cf. Ps 46,8.10; Ps 48, et Ez 31,9). Avec HANHART, *Sacharja*, 128, un rapprochement avec la tradition sacerdotale, telle qu'elle apparaît en Ez 1 et 43,1-8, nous paraît plus probable.

<sup>(54)</sup> Ainsi avec HANHART, *Sacharja*, 147.

<sup>(55)</sup> R.A. MASON, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi* (CBC; Cambridge 1997) 42.

<sup>(56)</sup> Sur ces rapprochements, cf., en particulier, C. MACKAY, “Zechariah in Relation to Ezekiel 40-48”, *Evangelical Quarterly* 40 (1968) 197-210; St.L. COOK, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis 1995) 148-53; St.S. TUELL, “Haggai-Zechariah: Prophecy after the Manner of Ezekiel”, *SBL.SP 2000* (Atlanta 2000) 263-286.

de temple<sup>(57)</sup> alors qu'Ézéchiél était soucieux de distinguer clairement l'espace profane de la ville de celui, sacré, du temple, situé en dehors de la ville<sup>(58)</sup>.

L'oracle divin à la fin de la première vision, en 1,16, mentionne le temple: "C'est pourquoi, je reviens à Jérusalem avec compassion, ma maison sera bâtie en elle — oracle de YHWH des Armées —, le cordeau sera tendu sur Jérusalem". Ce verset a cependant toutes les chances d'être secondaire: introduction déplacée ou arbitraire avec לִכְן; reprise de la formule du messenger; répétition du thème de la compassion; besoin de préciser des données trop peu concrètes de l'oracle de base; anticipation prématurée de la vision de l'arpenteur. Une des fonctions rédactionnelles de ce verset est clairement de relier le message de Zacharie à celui d'Aggée, dont un des thèmes principaux est la reconstruction du temple. Cet ajout de 1,16 nous rend d'autant plus sensible au fait que dans la vision de l'arpenteur il n'est pas explicitement et, en fait, pas du tout question du temple. En est-il question dans la vision pivot 4,1-6aα.10b-14?

## 2. Le temple dans la vision du chandelier?

La réponse dépend de l'interprétation que l'on accorde à l'image du chandelier au v. 2: "J'eus la vision que voici: un porte-lampes tout de lui en or, et un<sup>(59)</sup> réservoir sur son sommet, et ses sept lampes sur lui, sept et sept becs aux lampes qui sont sur son sommet", ce que l'on traduira plus clairement par "sept fois sept becs pour les lampes qui sont à son sommet"<sup>(60)</sup>. On lit aujourd'hui encore que le terme נֶזְרֵךְ signifierait "un

<sup>(57)</sup> Cf. particulièrement, sur ce point, D.L. PETERSEN, "Zechariah's Visions: A Theological Perspective", VT 34 (1984) 195-206; et P. MARINKOVIC, "Was wissen wir über den zweiten Tempel aus Sach 1-8", *Konsequente Traditionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Klaus Baltzer zum 65. Geburtstag* (éd. R. BARTELMUS – TH. KRÜGER – H. UTZSCHNEIDER) (OBO 126; Fribourg – Göttingen 1993) 281-295. Za 2,9 a influencé Apoc 21,22-23: "Je n'y vis pas de sanctuaire, car le Seigneur Dieu, le Tout-Puissant, est son sanctuaire, ainsi que l'agneau. La ville n'a besoin ni de soleil ni de lune pour y briller, car la gloire de Dieu l'éclaire, et sa lampe, c'est l'agneau" (NBS).

<sup>(58)</sup> Cf. Ez 45,1-8; 48,8-14 et passim. Cependant, "le nom de la ville sera Adonai-Shamma ("YHWH est là")" (Ez 48,35).

<sup>(59)</sup> L'hébreu a "son réservoir". La LXX n'a pas le suffixe. Les Massorètes auront été influencés par le mot précédent, cf. POLA, *Priestertum*, 62.

<sup>(60)</sup> Avec D. BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* (OBO 50/3; Fribourg – Göttingen 1992) III, 950; de même POLA, *Priestertum*, 62.

ouvrage en forme de branche” (“a branchwork”)<sup>(61)</sup>, ce qui permettrait un rapprochement avec le chandelier à sept branches qui se trouvait dans le temple (1 R 7,49), voire dans le tabernacle du désert (Ex 25,31-40 et 37,17-24). Cette identification n’est philologiquement guère possible: *נֵר* vient de *נָלַל* “rouler” et signifie “vasque, coupe, cupule”. L’iconographie nous enseigne qu’une lampe à huile en céramique pouvait avoir une certaine dimension et posséder sept pincements ou becs pour y fixer le nombre correspondant de mèches <sup>(62)</sup>. Un chandelier avec sept fois ce modèle de cupule à sept becs, avec 49 flammes donc, le tout amplifié par le reflet dans l’or dont est fait le candélabre, dépasse cependant de toute évidence tout modèle humain et utilitaire. Le chiffre symbolique sept fois sept déjà signale la perfection du monde divin. Le langage est “excessif”, signalant l’incandescence extraordinaire de la présence divine. Avec d’autres moyens, mais dans le même but, Ézéchiel soulignait la luminosité extrême de la *כבוד יהוה*. La clef pour la compréhension de cette vision est offerte par la fin de la vision précédente: “et en tant que gloire je serai au milieu d’elle” (2,9). Il serait peut-être abusif d’affirmer que le temple n’a rien à faire avec cette vision (on est impuissant devant l’*argumentum e silentio*), mais il est clair que sa visée n’est pas le temple <sup>(63)</sup>. Le lecteur, avec le visionnaire, est confronté à la présence divine elle-même.

Les sept cupules reçoivent une interprétation explicite au v. 10b: “Ces sept-là, ils (représentent) les yeux <sup>(64)</sup> de YHWH qui circulent sur toute la terre”. On peut penser ici aussi à la vision de la *merkabah* en Ez 1: Les jantes des quatre roues “étaient remplis d’yeux tout autour” (Ez 1,18b, et 10,12b). Paul Auvray avait proposé de traduire עֵינִי par

<sup>(61)</sup> Ainsi, en se référant à L.G. RIGNELL, *Die Nachtgesichte des Sacharja*. Eine exegetische Studie (Lund 1950) 146-150; A. WOLTERS, “Confessional Criticism and the Night Visions of Zechariah”, *Renewing Biblical Interpretation* (éd. C. BARTHOLOMEW – C. GREENE – K. MÖLLER) (Scripture and Hermeneutics Series 1; Grand Rapids 2000) 90-117, 111.

<sup>(62)</sup> Cf. MEYERS – MEYERS, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, illustration n° 12.

<sup>(63)</sup> Contrairement à E.W. CONRAD, *Zechariah* (Readings; Sheffield 1999) 58: “When Zechariah lifts up his eyes, he sees the temple under construction. He is looking at imagery and activity associated with building the temple”; et à BODA, *Haggai / Zechariah*, 271: “The lampstand (connected in the past to tabernacle and temple) represents the temple project...”. D’autres ont identifié le chandelier à la communauté israélite nourrie par l’huile des deux oliviers lors de son effort de reconstruction du temple; ainsi, par ex., E. REUSS, *La Bible*. Traduction nouvelle avec introductions et commentaires (Paris 1876) II, 353, note 8.

<sup>(64)</sup> Certaines traduisent par “sources”.

“éclat”<sup>(65)</sup>. D’autres pensent plutôt à des clous qui renforcent les jantes des roues<sup>(66)</sup>. Quoi qu’il en soit, il s’agit en Zacharie d’un même symbole du Dieu omniscient qui voit toutes choses. Le verbe שָׁמַח “aller et venir” est synonyme du verbe הִלָּךְ au hitpaël pour dire l’activité des cavaliers qui parcourent la terre (1,10b et 6,7b). Est-ce pour cette raison que le participe du verbe “circuler” est au masculin pluriel alors que le duel עֵינֵי יְהוָה exigerait un féminin pluriel? En tous les cas, les sept lampes symbolisent la souveraineté et le contrôle de Dieu sur le monde visible et invisible, comme sur l’histoire des nations et la destinée de son peuple.

Ainsi, il paraît abusif d’interpréter la vision du chandelier comme vision du temple. Le mot “temple”, c’est-à-dire “maison” (בַּיִת) n’est employé dans les visions nocturnes que pour désigner le sanctuaire babylonien où, selon la sixième vision (5,11), sera installée l’idole de la méchanceté (הַרְשָׁעָה).

### 3. Josué et Zorobabel sont-ils présupposés dans cette vision?

À droite et à gauche de la présence divine se tiennent deux oliviers (v. 3). Le prophète demande à l’ange interprète ce qu’ils représentent (v. 11). Au delà du v. 12 qui est secondaire<sup>(67)</sup>, l’ange-interprète répond d’abord par son étonnement sur l’ignorance du prophète (“Ne sais-tu pas?”); et le prophète d’avouer “Non, mon Seigneur” (v. 12) — un verset qui retarde l’explication et, en créant un suspense, en souligne le caractère mystérieux et extraordinaire. L’énigme est “dévoilée” au v.

<sup>(65)</sup> “Sur le sens du mot ‘ayîn en Ez. 1,18 et 10,12”, VT 4 (1954) 1-6.

<sup>(66)</sup> Ainsi W. ZIMMERLI, *Ezechiel* (BK XIII/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969) 67, et O. KEEL, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst*. Eine neue Deutung der Majestäts-schilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4 (SBS 84/85; Stuttgart 1977) 268-269.

<sup>(67)</sup> Cf. les arguments suivants: 1) la question du v. 11, au lieu de recevoir une réponse, est suivie au v. 12 par une autre question; 2) cette question du v. 12 concernant les épis se rapporte à des éléments de la vision du chandelier dont la description n’a pas été donnée précédemment; 3) cette question du v. 12 ne reçoit pas de réponse; 4) le v. 14, préparé par le v. 13, répond à la question posée au v. 11 concernant les oliviers; 5) le sens du v. 12 ne s’éclaire qu’à partir d’une interprétation particulière du rapport entre le chandelier et les deux oliviers, il fait partie de l’histoire de la réception de la vision. Cf., récemment, POLA, *Priestertum*, 71-72. Tous ne partagent pas ce point de vue. KEEL, *Jahwe-Visionen*, 307-311, qui considère le v. 12 tout d’abord comme secondaire (274-275), voit dans des sortes de houppes sur certains sceaux l’équivalent des épis/branches. Ces épis ne feraient pas alors partie des arbres, mais du chandelier, et il faudrait donner à בְּיָד le sens de “sous l’autorité” du chandelier.



14: “Ceux-ci sont les deux fils de l’huile qui se tiennent devant le Seigneur de toute la terre”. Ce verset reste en fait assez énigmatique, comme il faut s’y attendre dans le genre littéraire visionnaire. Il a suscité une grande diversité d’interprétations. En voici un échantillon dans l’ordre chronologique de leur apparition: la répartition du peuple en laïcs et prêtres<sup>(68)</sup>; la royauté et le sacerdoce<sup>(69)</sup>; une paire d’anges qui conduit la révolte jérusalémitaine contre les Perses<sup>(70)</sup>; deux branches du sacerdoce ou le grand prêtre et son adjoint<sup>(71)</sup>; un compromis entre les Lévites du pays et les Sadoqites revenus d’exil<sup>(72)</sup>; le davidide Zorobabel et le grand-prêtre Josué<sup>(73)</sup>; des figures de la fertilité<sup>(74)</sup>; Zorobabel seul<sup>(75)</sup>; les représentants sacerdotaux et politiques de la communauté<sup>(76)</sup>; le futur prince messianique et le grand prêtre<sup>(77)</sup>; le conseil divin<sup>(78)</sup>; les agents jumeaux de la puissante assistance divine<sup>(79)</sup>; Josué et Zorobabel, non pas en tant que deux Messies, l’un sacerdotal, l’autre royal, mais dans leur fonction limitée, autour du temple, l’un comme initiateur d’un nouveau culte et d’un nouveau sacerdoce, l’autre comme représentant de l’ancienne dynastie et parrain du nouveau temple<sup>(80)</sup>; enfin, les deux prophètes Aggée et Zacharie<sup>(81)</sup>. Quels éléments permettent de départager les candidats?

Il est sage de partir de ce qui est connu. La fonction ou du moins la

<sup>(68)</sup> F. HITZIG, *Die zwölf kleinen Propheten* (KEH 1; Leipzig 1838, 41881) 351.

<sup>(69)</sup> REUSS, *Les Prophètes*, 353, note 8.

<sup>(70)</sup> P. HAUPT, “The Visions of Zechariah”, *JBL* 32 (1913) 107-122, 115.

<sup>(71)</sup> J. MORGENSTERN, “A Chapter in the History of the High-Priesthood”, *AJS* 55 (1938) 1-24, 183-197 et 360-377, spéc. 5 et 192.

<sup>(72)</sup> N. ALLAN, “The Identity of the Jerusalem Priesthood During the Exile”, *HeyJ* 23 (1982) 259-269, 269, n. 30.

<sup>(73)</sup> RIGNELL, *Nachtgesichte* 1950, 169-172.

<sup>(74)</sup> A.S. VAN DER WOUDE, “Die beiden Söhne des Öls (Sach 4:14): Messianische Gestalten?”, *Travels in the World of the Old Testament*. FS Martinus Adrianus Beek (éd. H. VOS – H. TEN CATE – N.A. UCHELEN) (Assen 1974) 262-268.

<sup>(75)</sup> R. STRAND, “The Two Olive Trees of Zechariah 4 and Revelation 11”, *AUSS* 20 (1982) 257-261.

<sup>(76)</sup> PETERSEN, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 229-234; de même MEYERS – MEYERS, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 258-259 et 275-277.

<sup>(77)</sup> GRAF REVENTLOW, *Die Propheten*, 59-60.

<sup>(78)</sup> W.H. ROSE, “Messianic Expectations in the Early Post-Exilic Period”, *TynB* 49 (1998) 373-376, 375.

<sup>(79)</sup> WOLTERS, “Confessional”, 114.

<sup>(80)</sup> POLA, *Priestertum*, 104-105.

<sup>(81)</sup> BODA, *Haggai / Zechariah*, 275.

position des deux personnages est de se tenir “devant [על] le Seigneur de toute la terre”. C’est celle des cavaliers qui viennent rendre compte de leur mission devant Dieu et qui sont ensuite envoyés pour réaliser le plan divin (6,5b). L’expression est utilisée dans le contexte du conseil divin auquel participe Michée ben Yimla (1 R 22,19: “J’ai vu YHWH assis sur son trône, et toute l’armée du ciel se tenant devant lui [עמד על] à sa droite et à sa gauche”). Les séraphim d’Es 6,1-2 se tiennent aussi “au-dessus de lui” (ainsi la NBS), cependant, comme en Za 4,14 et 6,5b, il faut sans doute entendre על au sens de “devant, en face de”. L’image est quelque peu différente en Ez 1 puisque les êtres vivants sont situés au-dessous de la voûte céleste sur laquelle est posé le trône de la gloire divine. Mais il s’agit chez Ézéchiél d’une sorte de décomposition de l’image en ses différents éléments. En Job 1,6 et 2,1, comme en Za 6,5b, le verbe est יצב au hitpaël, un équivalent de עמד: “les fils de Dieu vinrent se présenter devant [על] YHWH”. La phrase s’applique donc aux êtres célestes<sup>(82)</sup>, et, éventuellement, à des prophètes qui s’immiscent, en vision, au conseil divin pour entendre (l’allemand dirait *lauschen*) les instructions, mais sans qu’il soit formulé explicitement qu’ils se tiennent devant YHWH<sup>(83)</sup>. Cette dernière conception, celle d’une écoute des décisions divines, semble chère aux rédacteurs deutéronomistes, comme le montre Am 3,7, et nous éloigne probablement du monde visionnaire de Zacharie.

Les deux personnages sont appelés “les fils de l’huile” (בני־הזית). On a été un peu vite en besogne, dans le passé, en associant cette expression à l’onction messianique, présupposant que les deux oliviers sont des oints, des Messies, l’un royal, l’autre sacerdotal. Rien n’est vraiment exprimé sur une distinction entre la fonction des deux personnages à la droite et à la gauche. On connaît de nombreux sceaux de style assyrien et palestinien où la divinité lunaire, représentée par un croissant de lune posé sur un socle, est flanquée de deux arbres stylisés<sup>(84)</sup>. Les arbres à droite et à gauche sont un même symbole de

<sup>(82)</sup> On peut ajouter au dossier Ps 82,1 (“Dieu se tient dans l’assemblée de El; il juge au milieu des dieux”).

<sup>(83)</sup> Voir aussi Jér 23,16-22 (les prophètes auraient dû assister au conseil divin avant de parler en son nom), Am 3,7 (Dieu révèle ses secrets à ses serviteurs, les prophètes) et Job 15,8 (“As-tu entendu les secrets de Dieu?”).

<sup>(84)</sup> Cf. KEEL, *Jahwe-Visionen*, 288 (n° 209, 211); ID. – Chr. UEHLINGER, *Göttingen, Götter und Gottessymbole. Neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen* (QD 134; Freiburg et al. 1993) 347 (n° 304).

fertilité. Il en va de même des deux femmes aux ailes de cigogne en 5,9, des deux montagnes d'entre lesquelles sortent les chars en 6,1 et probablement des deux côtés du rouleau volant en 5,3. Il est vrai que d'autres sceaux représentent en plus ou à la place des deux arbres deux personnages différents<sup>(85)</sup>. Adam S. van der Woude<sup>(86)</sup> note par ailleurs que le terme attendu משיח n'est pas employé. Ni le terme שמן utilisé pour l'huile d'onction royale (1 Sm 16,13; 1 R 1,39) ou sacerdotale (Lv 8,12; Ex 30,23-33). הַיִּצְהָר, "l'huile" fraîche, évoque la fertilité, l'abondance de la bénédiction et se trouve généralement associé, sauf ici, au blé et au vin (Ag 1,11; Os 2,10; Dt 7,3.13; 11,14)<sup>(87)</sup>. Dans l'ajout du v. 12, הַיִּצְהָר est remplacé par הַזָּהָב "l'or", une métaphore pour l'huile dorée, et on y lit que des conduits vont du chandelier vers les oliviers. Cet ajout a peut-être aussi pour fonction de corriger un malentendu: les oliviers ne sont pas en soi glorieux parce qu'ils fournissent l'huile, ce sont eux qui reçoivent leur splendeur de la menorah<sup>(88)</sup>. Quoi qu'il en soit, et nous hésitons encore sur la compréhension de cette figure, le style visionnaire, le vocabulaire qui renvoie au conseil divin, le langage symbolique très général de l'abondance et de la fertilité qu'impliquent l'olivier et son huile fraîche, non seulement nous font rejeter une interprétation messianique, mais nous font aussi douter des interprétations historisantes qui appliquent l'image des deux oliviers soit à la dyarchie du roi et du prêtre, soit au couple que forment dans la tradition les prophètes Aggée et Zacharie.

Il nous semble que c'est le présupposé d'un message identique de ces deux prophètes qui fait obstacle à une juste attention à la spécificité du contenu des visions nocturnes de Zacharie. Cette identité est évidemment appuyée par la tradition. Les suscriptions aux deux livres datent le ministère des deux prophètes à la même deuxième année de Darius (Ag 1,1 et Za 1,1 et 7), mais nous avons vu que la date donnée au cycle des visions nocturnes est suspecte. Le document araméen d'Esdras, en particulier, lorsqu'il traite de la reconstruction du temple aux chs 5 et 6 associe étroitement les deux prophètes: "Le prophète Aggée et le prophète Zacharie, fils d'Iddo, parlèrent au nom du Dieu d'Israël aux Judéens qui étaient en Juda et à Jérusalem. Alors

<sup>(85)</sup> Cf. KEEL, *Jahwe-Visionen*, 290 (n° 212); ID. – Chr. UEHLINGER, *Göttinnen*, 347 (n° 303).

<sup>(86)</sup> VAN DER WOUDE, "Die beiden Söhne des Öls", 262-268.

<sup>(87)</sup> Cf. H. RINGGREN, Art. "יצהר", *TWAT* II (1982) 825-826.

<sup>(88)</sup> C'est ce que souligne H. STRAUSS, "Salbung. II. AT", *TRE* 29 (1998) 709-711, 710: "l'éclat des deux 'Fils de l'huile' est le reflet de celui de Yhwh".

Zorobabel, fils de Shéaltiel, et Josué, fils de Yotsadaq, commencèrent à bâtir la maison de Dieu à Jérusalem. Et avec eux étaient les prophètes de Dieu, qui les assistaient” (5,6) et “Et les anciens des Judéens bâtirent avec succès, selon la parole prophétique d’Aggée, le prophète, et de Zacharie, fils d’Iddo” (6,14). Il s’agit d’un raccourci rétrospectif. Si nous nous arrêtons au contenu des visions nocturnes, il faut reconnaître que ni le langage ni le message ne sont identiques à ceux d’Aggée.

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\* \*

Les propositions d’insertion des visions nocturnes dans l’histoire en lien direct avec les oracles du prophète Aggée reposent donc sur des bases bien fragiles. L’attente de trouver dans le contexte historique la clef de lecture adéquate pour comprendre ces visions est finalement déçue. Ce résultat quelque peu négatif, la résistance des visions nocturnes à une lecture “historicisante”, conduit à penser que l’exégèse critique reste aujourd’hui encore trop obnubilée par la recherche de l’insertion précise des textes prophétiques dans l’histoire. D’une part, des textes religieux comme les visions nocturnes de Zacharie mobilisent un langage symbolique qui s’inscrit dans une tradition prophétique<sup>(89)</sup> et exige une poétique spécifique de lecture. D’autre part, les textes sont organisés de telle sorte que le référent historique est en quelque sorte occulté — “difficulté tactique” — au profit du référent qui est Dieu lui-même se révélant à son peuple<sup>(90)</sup>.

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<sup>(89)</sup> Sur la spécificité du langage visionnaire, cf. récemment, J.M. VINCENT, “‘Ils virent la voix’. Réflexions théologiques sur la vision dans l’Ancien Testament”, *ETR* 78 (2003) 1-23; et R. FORNARA, *La visione contraddetta. La dialettica fra visibilità e non-visibilità divina nella Bibbia ebraica* (AnBib 155; Roma 2004).

<sup>(90)</sup> Les dates mêmes, parfois très précises dans leur formulation à l’époque exilique (Ézéchiél) et postexilique (Za 1-8; Daniel), qu’elles soient rédactionnelles ou non, attestent que Dieu a parlé à son peuple dans des temps déterminés, mais elles ne peuvent guère être perçues comme des clefs fournies par les rédacteurs pour une lecture historique. Ce serait prêter aux rédacteurs un souci qui n’est pas celui de leur époque.

## SUMMARY

The aim of this article is to point out danger to which “historicizing” interpretations of the nocturnal visions of Zechariah (Zech 1,7–6,8\*) are exposed. Research into the historical context has been thoroughly renewed by studies by Th. Pola (2003) and M.J. Boda (2004, 2005) but is it really certain that the nocturnal visions concern the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and that it is necessary to liken, as tradition does, the message of the cycle of visions to that of the oracles of the prophet Haggai?

# ANIMADVERSIONES

## The “Command of the Lord” in 1 Cor 14,37 – a Saying of Jesus?

The “command of the Lord” in 1 Cor 14,37 is generally understood as referring not to a saying of Jesus, but to Paul’s apostolic exhortations in the authority of the risen Christ<sup>(1)</sup>. There are only very few exceptions to this view: W.D. Davies counts the passage among Paul’s explicit references to Jesus tradition<sup>(2)</sup>; more specifically, B. Gerhardsson and P.J. Tomson think of an *agraphon* about the silence of women (cf. 1 Cor 14,34-35)<sup>(3)</sup>. A. Lindemann remains undecided whether Paul is referring to his own authority or somehow to Jesus tradition<sup>(4)</sup>; A.C. Thiselton’s commentary does not discuss the question at all<sup>(5)</sup>.

In this article I will argue that in 1 Cor 14,37 κυρίου ἐντολή<sup>(6)</sup> is best

<sup>(1)</sup> J. WEISS, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (KEK; Göttingen 1910) 343; A. ROBERTSON – A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh 1914) 327; J. HÉRING, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (London 1962) 155; A. SCHLATTER, *Paulus, der Bote Jesu. Eine Deutung seiner Briefe an die Korinther* (Stuttgart 1969) 390; C.K. BARRETT, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London 1971) 333-334; F.F. BRUCE, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (NCB; London 1971) 136; W.F. ORR – J.A. WALTHER, *1 Corinthians* (AB 32; Garden City, NY 1976) 314; C. SENFT, *La première épître de Saint-Paul aux Corinthiens* (CNT[N] 2,7; Neuchâtel 1979) 183; W.A. GRUDEM, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington 1982) 51-52; D.E. AUNE, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI 1983) 221; L. MORRIS, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (TNTC; Leicester – Grand Rapids, MI 1985) 198; F. LANG, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (NTD 7; Göttingen 1986) 201; D.A. CARSON, *Showing the Spirit. A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, MI 1987) 132; G.D. FEE, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 1987) 711; S.J. KISTEMAKER, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NTC; Grand Rapids, MI 1993) 516; R.B. HAYS, *First Corinthians* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY 1997) 244; W. SCHRAGE, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther Vol. 3* (EKK 7/3; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1999) 459, n. 556; R.F. COLLINS, *First Corinthians* (Sacra Pagina 7; Collegeville, MN 1999) 522; C. WOLFF, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (THK 7; Leipzig 2000) 347; as possibly referring to Paul’s authority H. CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1975) 246.

<sup>(2)</sup> W.D. DAVIES, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism. Some Elements in Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia 1980) 140-141.

<sup>(3)</sup> B. GERHARDSSON, *Memory and Manuscript. Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI – Livonia, MI 1998) 306; P.J. TOMSON, “La première épître aux Corinthiens comme document de la tradition apostolique de halakha”, *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. R. BIERINGER) (BETL 125; Leuven 1996) 466.

<sup>(4)</sup> A. LINDEMANN, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (HNT 9/1; Tübingen 2000) 322.

<sup>(5)</sup> A.C. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI – Carlisle 2000).

<sup>(6)</sup> For an evaluation of the different textual variants see WOLFF, *1 Korinther*, 347, n. 572; SCHRAGE, *1 Korinther*, III, 460, n. 558; COLLINS, *1 Corinthians*, 522.

understood as referring to a saying of Jesus<sup>(7)</sup>. I will first give reasons for this view and then analyse different possible candidates of Jesus tradition to which Paul might allude.

### 1. Arguments from the Language Used

The language Paul uses in 1 Cor 14,37 clearly points to a saying of Jesus and not to an apostolic exhortation. This is shown by the fact that he uses similar language in undisputed references to Jesus tradition in the same letter in 7,10 (παράγγελλω οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλὰ ὁ κύριος), 7,25 (ἐπιταγὴ κυρίου) and 9,14 (ὁ κύριος διέταξεν)<sup>(8)</sup>. Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 7 Paul clearly distinguishes the commandments of the Lord, which are of unquestionable, absolute authority, from his own “opinion” (γνώμη) which is not of the same authority (7,25.40; cf. 7,10.12). Although he claims to possess the Holy Spirit, thus adding weight to his view (7,40), and although elsewhere he claims that he himself speaks “in Christ” (2 Cor 2,17; 12,19) and that Christ speaks through him (2 Cor 13,3), he maintains a clear distinction between what was said “by the Lord” and what someone says “in the Lord”<sup>(9)</sup>. Therefore Paul would hardly call his own opinion (however inspired and authoritative) a “command of the Lord”. For this reason we cannot compare 14,37 with 7,40<sup>(10)</sup>. Furthermore, his reference to the prophets and the “spiritual” in 14,37 is not on the same level as his claim to possess the Holy Spirit in 7,40. The latter serves to underline the authority of his own, inspired opinion, while in 14,37 he expects that those who claim to have the Spirit of Christ will by this Spirit recognise Christ’s own commandment and accept its authority (cf. 12,3 for the close connection of possessing the spirit and accepting Christ’s lordship). Finally, it is hard to understand why, in v. 38, Paul announces such severe judgement<sup>(11)</sup> if in v. 37 he only refers to his own inspiration by the risen Christ. This is very different from the way Paul speaks about his own opinion in chapter 7. For all these reasons it is most likely that in 1 Cor 14,37 Paul refers to a saying of Jesus.

<sup>(7)</sup> In Paul, “Lord” always refers to Jesus, except in some citations from the Septuagint, see LINDEMANN, *1 Korinther*, 322 and SCHRAGE, *1 Korinther*, III, 460 with n. 559.

<sup>(8)</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 11,23 (παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου); 1 Thess 4,15 (λόγος κυρίου). That 1 Thess 4,15 refers to a saying of Jesus has been widely questioned. But there are compelling reasons for this, see D. WENHAM, *Paul – Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids, MI 1995) 305-311, 332-333.

<sup>(9)</sup> See B. GERHARDSSON, *The Reliability of the Gospel Tradition* (Peabody, MA 2001) 20: Paul “makes a clear distinction between his own words and those of the Lord. ... we observe how Paul proceeds when he does not have a specific word from Jesus to support him. He then states without circumlocution that in such cases he cannot refer to any command of the Lord, but is simply providing his own opinion. These passages are embarrassing evidence against the common opinion that in the early church no distinction was made between what was said ‘by the Lord (himself)’ and what was said by some one [*sic*] else ‘in the Lord’ ... In 1 Corinthians 7 we see how ... Paul, at least on occasion, very clearly upheld the distinction between that which was said ‘by the Lord’ and that which was said ‘in the Lord’”.

<sup>(10)</sup> *Pace* SCHRAGE, *1 Korinther*, III, 460 and many others.

<sup>(11)</sup> Here, “is not recognized”, does not merely mean, “not recognized as a prophet”, but the expression has the last judgement in view, see HAYS, *1 Corinthians*, 244-245; GRUDEM, *Gift*, 52, especially n. 104 (with further references); SCHRAGE, *1 Korinther*, III, 460-461; *pace* THISELTON, *1 Corinthians*, 1165-1166; SENFT, *1 Corinthiens*, 183-184.



## 2. The Relationship of 1 Cor 14,37 to the Argument of Chapters 12–14

If Paul actually refers to a saying of Jesus without citing it, which tradition does he have in mind? There is no explicit reference to Jesus tradition in the immediate or wider context of 1 Cor 14,37. This might be the main reason that the vast majority of scholarship holds the “command of the Lord” to refer to a personal revelation or conviction of Paul. The “Western” text noted this difficulty and therefore left out ἐντολή<sup>(12)</sup>, reading “recognize that what I have written is of the Lord”, which can be understood in a more general sense, referring to Paul’s inspiration in a similar way as the passages mentioned above.

Paul obviously expects his readers to understand immediately which saying he alludes to, otherwise he would have had to say more. In order to find out, we need to investigate to which part of the epistle “what I am writing to you” in 1 Cor 14,37 refers. Paul cannot have in mind only the immediately preceding passage about women in church (vv. [33b]34–35), since v. 37 is much too general for that, as is especially signalled by the plural ἄ<sup>(13)</sup>. Furthermore, after pointing out the negative consequences of not obeying this command of the Lord (v. 38), Paul immediately continues in vv. 39–40: “So, my brothers (and sisters), be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order”. Here Paul clearly summarises his argument of chapters 12–14 and not only vv. (33b)34–35<sup>(14)</sup>. He links this summary with the “command of the Lord” by use of ὥστε. Moreover, it is doubtful if vv. (33b)34–35 were originally part of the text or rather a marginal note that was interpolated later, as is held by many<sup>(15)</sup>. For all these reasons v. 37 must refer to Paul’s argument regarding the spiritual gifts in chapters 12–14. “Paul’s purpose is to conclude the discussion [of chapters 12–14] and at the same time to bar the way for any prophet at Corinth to propound “ἐν πνεύματι” new rules which would contradict those given by Paul”<sup>(16)</sup>.

The teaching of chapters 12–14 is contained in a nutshell already in 12,7<sup>(17)</sup>: each member of the body of Christ is given the manifestation of the

<sup>(12)</sup> This is fully in tune with many other places where the Western text clarifies difficult passages (e.g. by the transposition of vv. 34–35!); therefore the rule *lectio brevior potior* does not apply here (*contra* BARRETT, *1 Corinthians*, 333). See also above n. 6.

<sup>(13)</sup> See GRUEDEM, *Gift*, 51; AUNE, *Prophecy*, 258.

<sup>(14)</sup> So also BARRETT, *1 Corinthians*, 334; LANG, *1/2 Korinther*, 201. V. 40 might include vv. 33b–35, see BARRETT, *ibid.* and WOLFF, *1 Korinther*, 348.

<sup>(15)</sup> FEE, *1 Corinthians*, 699–705; LINDEMANN, *1 Korinther*, 316–321; HAYS, *1 Corinthians*, 245–249; CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians*, 246; SCHRAGE, *1 Korinther*, III, 479–92, and others (further references in SCHRAGE, *1 Korinther*, III, 481, n. 703; COLLINS, *1 Corinthians*, 515 and CARSON, *Showing*, 124, n. 34). These verses are thought to be authentic e.g. by COLLINS, *1 Corinthians*, 515–517; CARSON, *Showing*, 121–131; THISELTON, *1 Corinthians*, 1146–1161 and WOLFF, *1 Korinther*, 341–345. BARRETT, *1 Corinthians*, 331–333, remains undecided.

<sup>(16)</sup> GRUEDEM, *Gift*, 51. Similarly AUNE, *Prophecy*, 258 (14,37 refers to chapter 14); ROBERTSON and PLUMMER, *1 Corinthians*, 327 (14,37 refers to chapters 11–14). Here Paul hardly refers to chapters 1–14 (*contra* CARSON, *Showing*, 131). A certain case could be made for chapters 8–14, since chapters 8–11 are unified with 12–14 by the theme of mutual “love” and “upbuilding” (8,1) (see the following).

<sup>(17)</sup> HAYS, *1 Corinthians*, 211; similarly U. BROCKHAUS, *Charisma und Amt*. Die paulinische Charismenlehre auf dem Hintergrund der frühchristlichen Gemeindefunktionen (Wuppertal 1975) 163 and SCHRAGE, *1 Korinther*, III, 111.

Spirit for the benefit of the whole congregation ("for the common good"); this common benefit is the purpose of the spiritual gifts Paul is talking about in chapters 12–14. Paul mentions this purpose again in 12,25: the members of the church shall show "care for one another". In chapter 14, this purpose is expressed by the mutual "upbuilding" of the church (vv. 3-5,12,17) and the mutual "benefit" (v. 6), now in relation to the congregational meeting: whatever happens there has to contribute to the benefit and the upbuilding of the church. The way spiritual gifts are exercised as well as the higher or lesser value of individual gifts has to be measured by this standard. Among the "greater" gifts which the Corinthians are to seek (12,31a) are the interpretation of tongues (14,5,12) and prophecy (14,1,5,12,39), because these build up the church, whereas tongues without interpretation do not serve this purpose, but build up only the speakers themselves.

According to some commentators, "to build up" in chapter 14 denotes edifying speech, since "upbuilding" is paralleled to "encouragement" and "consolation" in 14,3. Furthermore, the reason prophecy, (words of) revelation, (words of) knowledge, teaching and interpreted tongues are "edifying" is that they are ways of understandable speech which addresses the mind (vv. 3,6,9,15-16,19,24). But this does not mean that for Paul only these gifts of speech serve for "edification", and not also the practical spiritual gifts<sup>(18)</sup>. Paul's concentration on gifts of speech in chapter 14 has to do with the situation in Corinth with which he is dealing: the Corinthian Christians overemphasise the gift of tongues in congregational meetings because they misunderstand the true purpose of worship. Paul opposes their misjudgement by emphasising mutual "upbuilding" as the purpose of everything that happens in communal worship. In church meetings it is mainly gifts of speech that are exercised (cf. 1 Cor 14,26), and therefore in chapter 14 Paul addresses only them, whereas the practical gifts are exercised more in the everyday life of the church. Elsewhere Paul uses the language of "upbuilding" in connection with everyday situations like the tensions between the strong and the weak and the problem of food offered to idols (Rom 14,19; 15,2; 1 Cor 8,1; 10,23). Here the issue is offending others by behaviour, not so much by speech. It follows that we cannot limit "upbuilding" to speech although mutual "encouragement" is an important means of upbuilding the church. Rather, for Paul "upbuilding" should characterise all Christian action and speech. "Upbuilding" is therefore synonymous with other words which characterise Christian behaviour in a general way<sup>(19)</sup>: benefitting others (συμφέρειν 6,12; 10,23; 12,7, ὀφελεῖν 14,6) and seeking the good of others (10,24). According to Rom 14,17 – 15,2, that which builds up is ethically "good", that which does not is ethically "evil", and "building up" is further characterised by serving one another, carrying one another's burdens and pleasing one another, not oneself. Finally, according to 1 Cor 8,1

<sup>(18)</sup> Like healing, miracles, faith, leadership, helping, serving, giving and practical compassion (1 Cor 12,9-10; 13,2-3; Rom 12,7-8). That in early Christian teaching an explicit distinction could be made between gifts of speech and practical gifts is shown by 1 Pet 4,11.

<sup>(19)</sup> See I. KITZBERGER, *Bau der Gemeinde*. Das paulinische Wortfeld οἰκοδομή / (ἐπ)οικοδομεῖν (FZB 53; Würzburg 1986).

“upbuilding” is synonymous to “love” (ἀγάπη): “love builds up” (similarly Eph 4,16). Therefore for Paul “building one another up” is synonymous with serving one another in love<sup>(20)</sup>.

This argument is supported by 1 Corinthians 13, the chapter that interrupts the treatment of spiritual gifts in chapters 12 and 14. In chapter 13 Paul takes up 12,7.25 and prepares the ground for his argument in chapter 14. In chapter 14 he then applies to the special case of spiritual gifts what he has said generally about love in chapter 13 (cf. also the explicit connection of love and spiritual gifts in 12,31–13,3 and 14,1). By his excursus on love in chapter 13 Paul emphasises that love is the purpose and criterion of spiritual gifts. The gifts are but instruments of love, of the mutual upbuilding of the church<sup>(21)</sup>. Exercising different spiritual gifts is the specific, individual way in which different Christians serve one another in love. Also in Romans 12 Paul’s teaching about spiritual gifts is framed by references to love. Verses 1–2 speak of the “will of God”, namely “what is good and acceptable and perfect”, living a life which is “holy and pleasing to God”, and vv. 9–21 speak of a love that holds fast to what is good, honours others above oneself, serves others in practical ways and even does good to one’s enemies. Love is the centre of Pauline ethics, it characterises Christian behaviour as a whole (Rom 13,8–10; Gal 5,6.13–14; 1 Cor 13,13)<sup>(22)</sup>. Therefore Paul’s teaching about spiritual gifts is part of his ethical teaching; it is about the individual shape love takes on as determined by individual God-given abilities<sup>(23)</sup>.

We can conclude that in 1 Cor 14,37 Paul has in mind the whole argument of chapters 12–14. He refers to the mutual “upbuilding” of the church — which is the same as mutual love — as the principle of his ethics which should also govern a healthy exercise of spiritual gifts.

### 3. The Background of 1 Cor 14,37

#### a) Jesus’ Teaching about Love and Mutual Service in General

If in 1 Cor 14,37 Paul is referring to mutual “upbuilding” and mutual love as the main issues dealt with in chapters 12–14, then “command of the Lord” might refer in a summarising way to the teaching of Jesus about the need for love and mutual service<sup>(24)</sup>. Paul’s own teaching on love and mutual service is close to Jesus’ in many respects as is shown by the following examples<sup>(25)</sup>: love as the summary and fulfilment of the whole law (Rom 13,8–10 and Gal 5,13–14, cf. Matt 7,12; 22,39–40 par.); loving Christian brothers and sisters in

<sup>(20)</sup> Cf. KITZBERGER, *Bau*, 288.

<sup>(21)</sup> BROCKHAUS, *Charisma*, 185, 189, 216; SCHRAGE, *1 Korinther*, III, 276.

<sup>(22)</sup> In 1 Cor 13,13 love occupies a special place in the triad “faith, love and hope” which characterises the whole of Christian existence (for the triad see further Gal 5,5–6; 1 Thess 1,3; 5,8; Rom 5,1–5; Eph 4,2–5; Col 1,4–5).

<sup>(23)</sup> BROCKHAUS, *Charisma*, 221, 226.

<sup>(24)</sup> N. JOHANSSON, “I Cor. XIII and I Cor. XIV”, *NTS* 10 (1963–1964) 392, also thinks that 1 Cor 14,37 refers to love, not because Paul alludes to Jesus’ teaching on the subject, but because for Paul the figure of Jesus is “Agape”. Thus the “command of the Lord” is the “commands [sic] of Agape”, i.e. what love expects concerning “the so-called virgins” (cf. vv. 34–35) and spiritual gifts.

<sup>(25)</sup> For a detailed and balanced analysis of this, see WENHAM, *Paul*, 234–240, 255–271.

the first place (1 Thess 4,9; Gal 5,13; 6,10; Rom 12,10; 13,8; cf. Matthew 18; Mark 9,42-50; Luke 17,1-4), but also everybody, even enemies (Rom 12,17-21; cf. Gal 6,10; 1 Thess 3,12; 5,12; cf. Matt 5,43-48 par.); avoiding offence to the weak (Romans 14-15; 1 Cor 8-10; cf. Matt 18,6-9 par.); serving others in humility by putting oneself last (Phil 2,1-11; Rom 14,4-12; 1 Cor 9,19,22; cf. Matt 20,25-28 par.; 23,12 par.; Luke 22,24-27); the unheard-of equality of women and Gentiles in the people of God (Gal 3,28; cf. Luke 10,38-42; Matt 8,11; 28,19 par.); the concern for the poor (1 Cor 13,3; 2 Corinthians 8-9; cf. Matt 19,21 par.; Luke 12,33); forgiving one another as Christ forgave us (Col 3,12-14; cf. Matt 6,12.14-15; 18,23-35); receiving one another (Rom 14,1; 15,7; cf. Matt 18,5 par.; 19,13-15; Luke 15,2); not judging one another (Rom 14,3.13; cf. Matt 7,1 par.). These close parallels in the teaching of Jesus strongly suggest that Paul’s teaching on these subjects does indeed reflect Jesus tradition which he knew and taught in his churches. It follows that in 1 Cor 14,37, too, Paul could be alluding to Jesus’ teaching on love in general.

b) Matt 7,21-23

David Wenham goes even further in suggesting that a more specific Jesus tradition might form the background of 1 Cor 14,37-38, namely Matt 7,21-23<sup>(26)</sup>. Matt 7,21 first states the general rule that not the mere claim of submitting to the lordship of Jesus<sup>(27)</sup> leads to participation in the kingdom of heaven, but only the corresponding practice of the will of Jesus’ heavenly Father. The “will of the Father” is the Old Testament law as interpreted by the teaching of Jesus. This is shown by the emphasis on Jesus’ own teaching in the parallel in Luke (6,46: “what I tell you”)<sup>(28)</sup> and also in the context of Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount (cf. 5,21-48: “I say to you”; 7,24-27:

<sup>(26)</sup> Dr David Wenham, Oxford, Letter from 11 October 2004.

<sup>(27)</sup> It is likely that in the Matthean context “Lord, Lord” is more than a mere address of respect, it addresses the Son of Man as judge of the world, see U. LUZ, *Matthew 1-7. A Commentary* (Minneapolis 1989) 444; W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (ICC; London 1988) I, 713. In its original pre-Easter setting the sentence at least “expressed Jesus’ ... conviction that his inspired words required whole-hearted obedience” (ibid.).

<sup>(28)</sup> Many regard Luke’s version as more original. In the same place in Jesus’ inaugural sermon (between the passages about the good and bad trees and the two houses) Luke has only a parallel to Matt 7,21; a parallel to Matt 7,22-23 is found in Luke 13,26-27 as part of the parable of the door (13,22-30). Here the people claiming to be disciples say nothing about charismatic performances but remind Jesus of their fellowship with him (“we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets”). It is possible that Matthew combined the two passages into a new unit, reworking them thoroughly (there are some signs of possible Matthean redaction in the parts particular to Matthew; thus the opinion of the majority of commentators). It is also possible that Matthew knew a different tradition which was very close to the two Lukan passages. The often-mentioned argument that Luke 13,26-27 reflects a pre-Easter setting (i.e. the Jewish audience of Jesus) whereas Matt 7,22 reflects the situation of the early church (thus e.g. LUZ, *Matthew 1-7*, 441) is not fully convincing since, as J. Schniewind points out, charismatic manifestations of the Spirit were an integral part of Jesus’ own ministry and were at times experienced by his disciples before Easter. For Schniewind, Luke 13,23-30 in turn is a combination of several originally independent sayings, e.g. Luke 13,25 an abbreviation of Matt 25,1-13, see *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (NTD 2; Göttingen 1950) 103. So the tradition process might have been more complicated than a simple Matthean redaction of two Q passages. For independent extra-biblical versions of the first part, see DAVIES – ALLISON, *Matthew*, I, 712-713.

“everyone who hears and does my words”) and in the wider context of Matthew’s Gospel. Jesus summarises the law by the Golden Rule (Matt 7,12) and the commandment to serve one another (20,24-28) and love one’s neighbour (20,34-40), even one’s enemy (5,43-48)<sup>(29)</sup>. Doing this distinguishes true disciples from false prophets as fruits show the quality of the trees which bear them (cf. vv. 15-20). In v. 22 the general statement is narrowed down to those “many” (cf. v. 13) who exercise exceptional charismatic gifts in the name of Jesus but lack fruits of love. They will not be acknowledged as true disciples by the Messiah Jesus in the Last Judgement: “I never knew you, ‘go away from me, you doers of lawlessness’ (Ps 6,9)” (v. 23), thus stating that there never has been true fellowship between him and them<sup>(30)</sup>. In Matthew, “lawlessness” means “not living in love as Jesus taught”. This is especially obvious in 24,12, where the “increase of lawlessness” is equated with “the love of many will grow cold”<sup>(31)</sup>.

Here we have an exact parallel to Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 13–14<sup>(32)</sup>. According to 13,3, exceptional charismatic performances and self-giving sacrifice “are of no benefit”<sup>(33)</sup> if not done as an expression of love. Whoever does not exercise their charismatic gifts as a means of love, and thus of mutual upbuilding, will not be “known” by the Lord in the last judgement (14,38). It is therefore very likely that Paul knew a Jesus tradition similar to that of Matt 7,21-23 and that this tradition was in his mind when he was writing 1 Corinthians 13–14, especially 13,1-3 and 14,37-38. “He (or she) will not be recognized”, literally “will not be known” (ἀγνοεῖται 14,38) might be a direct reminiscence of “I never knew (ἐγνων) you” in Matt 7,23 (cf. Matt 25,12 and Luke 13,27).

#### c) The Synoptic Love Commandment

So far we have seen that in 1 Cor 14,37 Paul possibly refers to Jesus’ teaching about love and mutual service. Further, we have seen that a tradition similar to Matt 7,21-23 is likely to have formed part of the background for Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 12–14, especially of 13,1-3 and 14,37-38. But this cannot yet be the whole answer. In 1 Cor 14,37 Paul refers to a “command” (ἐντολή) of Jesus. In Paul, as in the Septuagint, ἐντολή in the singular means an individual commandment, not a unity containing a number of commandments, for which νόμος or the plural ἐντολαί is used (cf. 1 Cor

<sup>(29)</sup> See LUZ, *Matthew 1–7*, 445–446; DAVIES – ALLISON, *Matthew*, I, 712.

<sup>(30)</sup> “Knowing” here has the sense of “having a close relationship”; the sentence is no early rabbinic ban formula (see LUZ, *Matthew 1–7*, 446) but means “I never recognized you as one of my own” (DAVIES – ALLISON, *Matthew*, I, 717). A similar response by the heavenly judge is found in Matt 25,12.

<sup>(31)</sup> This has been pointed out by LUZ, *Matthew 1–7*, 446; E. SCHWEIZER, *The Good News According to Matthew* (London 1976) 189.

<sup>(32)</sup> There is a possible contradiction between Matt 7,21 (“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven”) and 1 Cor 12,3 (“No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit”), but on this see LUZ, *Matthew 1–7*, 446–447.

<sup>(33)</sup> “Of no benefit” can refer either to the benefit of fellow-humans (cf. 14,6) or to the last judgement where these exceptional deeds will receive no reward, contrary to the hope that they may be a reason for boasting (ἵνα καυχώσῃται with the most reliable Alexandrian manuscripts). On the second possibility see BARRETT, *1 Corinthians*, 302 (cf. Gal 5,2).

7,19)<sup>(34)</sup>. If Paul simply alluded to the whole of Jesus' teaching on love, he would hardly use ἐντολή. The same would be true if he was only referring to Matt 7,21-23 since this passage does not contain a specific command, but only a general reference to "the will of my heavenly father"<sup>(35)</sup>. Rather, Paul seems to have in view a specific saying of Jesus, a specific "command" Jesus taught. From Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 12-14 we can conclude that this "command" had as its content the mutual love of believers.

Paul nowhere else speaks of an ἐντολή of Jesus in this connection. A possible parallel is the "law (νόμος) of Christ" in Gal 6,2 (cf. 1 Cor 9,21). However, in Paul, as in the Septuagint, νόμος without further specification means the law as a unity, as the sum of all the individual commandments it contains<sup>(36)</sup>. So in Gal 6,2 Paul might have in mind the whole of Jesus' teaching about love and service as can be suggested by "bear one another's burdens" and the contextual proximity of this verse to the themes of mutual love and the restoration of sinners (5,13-14, cf. 5,22; 6,1). On the other hand, the catchwords "fulfil", "law" and "one another" in Gal 6,2 reveal close ties to the wording of Gal 5,13-14 and Rom 13,8-10 where Paul speaks about the commandment to love one's neighbour<sup>(37)</sup>. Furthermore, in both places Paul interprets "love your neighbour as yourself" primarily as "love one another", i.e. as mutual love of fellow-believers: the "neighbours" are first and foremost "les 'proches' au sens spatial et religieux le plus strict, ... les frères"<sup>(38)</sup>. So "law (or "Torah") of Christ" probably refers to the specific way in which Jesus summarised the whole law in the love commandment<sup>(39)</sup>. Although strictly speaking this saying of Jesus is a single commandment, Paul could have called it "the law of Christ" instead of "(one) command of Christ (among others)" since it summarises and contains the whole law. So it is very probable that by the "command of the Lord" in 1 Cor 14,37 Paul means the same as by "law of Christ", namely the tradition of Jesus' summarising the law in its double love commandment. This is further supported by the fact that Rom 13,8-10 and Gal 5,13-14 are so similar to Matt 22,39-40 par. that they are very likely to be dependent on Jesus tradition<sup>(40)</sup>.

<sup>(34)</sup> On the Septuagint, see G. SCHRENK, "ἐντέλλομαι, ἐντολή", *TDNT* II, 546-547. For Paul, ἐντολή and νόμος are not identical in meaning, not even in Romans 7 (*contra* SCHRENK, *ibid.* 550), see C.E.B. CRANFIELD, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; London 1975) I, 353 (on Rom 7,12); F.F. BRUCE, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans* (TNTC 6; Leicester – Grand Rapids, MI 1985) 142 (on Rom 7,12); E. KÄSEMANN, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI 1980) 194 (on Rom 7,8) and 198 (on Rom 7,12).

<sup>(35)</sup> I am grateful to Professor I.H. Marshall, Aberdeen, for pointing this out to me.

<sup>(36)</sup> See W. GUTBROD in H. KLEINKNECHT – W. GUTBROD, "νόμος etc.", *TDNT* IV, 1022-1091 here 1046-1047 and 1069-1071.

<sup>(37)</sup> See WENHAM, *Paul*, 257, especially n. 106.

<sup>(38)</sup> C. SPICQ, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament* (EtB; Paris 1959) II, 296. However, for Paul love is not exclusively mutual love among Christians, but also love for everybody, even one's enemies, see e.g. Rom 12,14.17-21; Gal 6,10; 1Thess 3,12; 5,12.

<sup>(39)</sup> Cf. C. STETTLER, "Paul, the Law and Judgement by Works", *EvQ* 76 (2004) 195-215, here 210, n. 50.

<sup>(40)</sup> See WENHAM, *Paul*, 255-256; *contra*, e.g., V. P. FURNISH, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville 1968) 57. In Rom 13,8-10 and Gal 5,13-14 Paul only cites Lev 19,18, the second half of Jesus' double commandment. For a discussion of whether Paul actually knew the *double* commandment as it is presented in the synoptic Gospels, see STETTLER, "Paul", 199.



## d) "My Commandment" in John

One problem remains. In the synoptic Gospels the double commandment of love is nowhere called a command of Jesus. In Matthew the risen lord only refers to "everything that I have commanded (ἐνετειλάμην) you" in a summarising way (28,20)<sup>(41)</sup>, and one is reminded of those passages, especially in Matthew, where Jesus teaches in his own authority, most prominently in the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount ("I say to you", Matt 5,21-48). It is only in the Gospel of John that Jesus not only speaks about "my commandments (ἐντολαί)" in a general way (14,15.21; 15,10), but even more specifically about "my commandment (ἐντολή)", which he even calls "a new commandment" <sup>(42)</sup>, namely the commandment of mutual love among his disciples (13,34; 15,12, cf. 15,17). Paul could not possibly know the Gospel of John, but obviously both John and Paul independently drew on a tradition that called the love commandment a (or even the) "command of Jesus" <sup>(43)</sup>. It is disputed whether John interpreted the synoptic commandment to love one's neighbour and even one's enemy in the narrow sense of mutual love of Christians<sup>(44)</sup>, or whether John distinguished this "new commandment" of love among disciples from the wider synoptic commandments<sup>(45)</sup>. For Paul the former is true. He knew Jesus' instructions about love for enemies and Jesus' summary of the law in the love commandment, but he primarily interpreted "love for one's neighbour" in the sense of mutual love among Christians, however without completely reducing Christian love to it.

Moreover, it is interesting that elsewhere Paul mentions the "enracinement christologique"<sup>(46)</sup> of mutual love which is so central to John 13,34 ("love one another as I have loved you"). According to Paul, Christians should carry one another's burdens and please each other as Christ has done to them (Rom 15,1-3); they should accept one another as Christ has accepted them (Rom 15,7), forgive each other as Christ has done to them (Col 3,13), love one another as Christ has loved them (Eph 5,2). This similarity of Paul and John is hardly an accident. Rather, "Paul may know the tradition in precisely the same form" as John<sup>(47)</sup>.

<sup>(41)</sup> This is the only example for the use of ἐντολή/ἐντέλλεσθαι for commandments of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. This was overlooked by V.P. FURNISH, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (London 1973) 137, who says that "the Synoptics consistently use the word 'commandment(s)' to refer to the ordinances of the Old Testament law".

<sup>(42)</sup> The question of why John calls this commandment "new" is beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>(43)</sup> So also WENHAM, *Paul*, 257, regarding Gal 6,2 (WENHAM does not note 1 Cor 14,37 in this connection).

<sup>(44)</sup> This does not necessarily mean that in John Christian love is completely reduced to love of insiders, as is sometimes held. See C.K. BARRETT, *The Gospel According to St John* (London 1978) 452; J.A.T. ROBINSON, *The Priority of John* (London 1985) 329-339; J. AUGENSTEIN, *Das Liebesgebot im Johannesevangelium und in den Johannesbriefen* (BWANT 134; Stuttgart 1993) especially 93; H. THYEN, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen 2005) 608-613 (here further references).

<sup>(45)</sup> In this case John would presuppose and supplement the synoptic Gospels.

<sup>(46)</sup> C. SPICQ, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament* (EtB; Paris 1959) III, 178.

<sup>(47)</sup> WENHAM, *Paul*, 258, n. 107.



#### 4. *The Announcement of Judgement in 1 Cor 14,38*

If in 1 Cor 14,37 Paul refers to Jesus’ love commandment, which takes Lev 19,18 to be the essence of all the commandments concerning human relationships in the Torah, then the announcement of judgement in 1 Cor 14,38 is easily understandable: the consequence of a violation of Jesus’ central commandment must indeed be severe judgement. This is in line with those passages that deny a share in God’s kingdom to those who remain in behaviour that is contrary to love (1 Cor 6,9-10; Gal 5,19-21; Eph 5,5) <sup>(48)</sup>. If in 1 Cor 14,37 Paul alluded to some tradition other than this centre of Jesus’ ethics, it would be hard to explain such an extraordinarily sharp warning in the next verse.

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In our analysis of 1 Corinthians 12–14 we have seen that in 14,37-38 Paul picks up the main argument of these three chapters, namely that spiritual gifts rightly used are an expression of mutual love and a means of mutual upbuilding in the church. We have examined several possible backgrounds for the “command of the Lord” in 14,37 and can now conclude that most likely the phrase under question refers not only to Jesus’ teaching about love and mutual service in a general way, but more specifically to the commandment to love one’s neighbour (Lev 19,18) as cited and interpreted by Jesus (Matt 22,39-40 par.). Paul, like John (John 13,34; 15,12, cf. 15,17), seems to know a tradition that calls the love commandment a or even the command of Jesus. This interpretation of “command of the Lord” in 1 Cor 14,37 is further supported by the harsh announcement of judgement in 14,38 which is only understandable if something very central was at stake, namely love as the centre of Christian ethics. In addition, as David Wenham has pointed out, Paul’s argument in 1 Cor 13,1-3 and 14,37-38 closely parallels Matt 7,21-23. It is therefore probable that he knew a similar tradition linking an abuse of spiritual gifts, which is contrary to love, with the loss of salvation.

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#### SUMMARY

In 1 Cor 14,37 Paul mentions a “command of the Lord”. The language Paul uses indicates that he is not referring to his own apostolic authority but to a saying of Jesus. The context in 1 Corinthians 12–14 makes clear that the principle he has in mind is mutual love. Therefore he must be referring to the summary of the law given by Jesus in the love commandment which Paul primarily interprets in the sense of mutual love among Christians. Like John 13,34 he calls this commandment a command of Jesus. Moreover, Paul knows a tradition similar to Matt 7,21-23.

<sup>(48)</sup> On the connection of these passages with the love commandment, see STETTLER, “Paul”, 198-200.

## Translating ἅγιος in Col 1,2 and Eph 1,1(\*)

Col 1,2 (τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἁγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς) and Eph 1,1 (τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν [ἐν Ἐφέσῳ] καὶ πιστοῖς) present problems of translation and interpretation. For many, the Greek is simply unclear in Ephesians. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the Greek in both passages is clear and that sound translations of both are possible<sup>(1)</sup>. The main issue is how to translate ἅγιος and πιστός in these passages.

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In keeping with its usage in other letters attributed to Paul, translators usually render ἅγιος and its various forms as a noun, “saint(s)” (see Rom 1,7; 1 Cor 1,2; 2 Cor 1,1; Phil 1,1; 1 Thess 1,1 and Gal 1,2)<sup>(2)</sup>, while translating πιστός as an adjective, “faithful”. Scholars have assumed that both passages in these disputed letters should be read as if Paul did indeed write them. This is particularly noteworthy since persons who do not assume Pauline authorship in one or both letters<sup>(3)</sup> and those who do<sup>(4)</sup> make this same assumption without question. Those who do not affirm Pauline authorship should have sought the various ways the passages could be translated and those who do should have asked if Paul has used the term as he does normally. Neither has done so.

In actuality, both ἅγιος and πιστός are adjectives. Moule recognized this and translated Col 1,2 by rendering ἅγιος as “dedicated”; πιστός, “loyal”<sup>(5)</sup>. This is preferable since it consistently translates both adjectives as adjectives, correctly seeing these words as descriptions of the brothers. I agree with Moule with regard to Colossians and I believe the same applies to the passage in Ephesians: the best and most sensible way to translate the two words would be as adjectives. That would provide the following reading (or something similar): “to those [in Ephesus] who are holy and faithful”.

These renderings are best for at least four reasons. First and foremost, they are grammatically sound. In Col 1,2, the definite article, the noun and the

(\*) For St. Mary’s C. M. E. Church, Elberton, GA.

(1) For the purposes of this study, I shall set aside the question of whether or not *en Epheso* is original or an addition to Eph 1,1.

(2) In these passages from undisputed letters of Paul, “saints” is probably the best rendering of the Greek and its meaning within these contexts; however, the authorship of Ephesians is disputed and one should not take for granted that such a translation in Ephesians is correct, regardless of the author.

(3) E.g., A.T. LINCOLN – A.J.M. WEDDERBURN, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters* (NTT; Cambridge 1993) 83-86.

(4) E.g., F.F. BRUCE, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids 1984) 229-33.

(5) C.F.D. MOULE, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (CGTC; Cambridge UK) 45-46. Best has attempted to find a similar balance and consistency by translating ἅγιος and πιστός as nouns in Eph 1,1, “saints” and “believers” (E. BEST, *Ephesians. A Shorter Commentary* [Edinburgh, UK 2003] 1-6).

adjectives all agree in gender, number and case, indicating that they are interrelated and should be translated together. In fact, the entire clause is in the dative case. The parallel clause in Ephesians follows suit: the definite articles and the participle agree in gender, number and case, again indicating that they are interrelated and should be translated together. Again, the entire clause is in the dative case. In both passages the adjectives immediately follow the article, indicating the adjectives are attributive and modify what follows it (ἀδελφοῖς in Colossians; τοῖς οὖσιν in Ephesians). The καί serves as a connector between the two adjectives, thereby making both adjectives modifiers.

Secondly, linguistics would also indicate that “holy” or “pure” is the primary definition for ἅγιος in the Greek language. For example, that is the meaning in Plato’s *Critias* 116c and *Leges* 729e and Aristophanes’ *Aves* 522. “Holy” is clearly the meaning in LXX Exod 26,33, LXX Deut 7,6 and LXX 1 Kgs 8,6. More importantly for the study of the NT, it is also very acceptable renderings of Matt 3,11 and Heb 9,2-3.

Thirdly, such a rendering is consistent with the theology of both Colossians and Ephesians. For Colossians and Ephesians, each individual Christian is holy: “to present you before him holy and blameless (ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους)” (Col 1,22) and the parallel reads, “so that we might be holy and blameless (ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους)” before him (Eph 1,4). Eph 4,24 reads, “and to put on the new person created in accordance with the God Who creates in righteousness and holiness (ὁσιότητι)<sup>(6)</sup> of truth”, while Col 3,12 reads “Therefore, as chosen of God, holy and beloved (ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι)”. Similarly, husbands are exhorted to care for their wives in such a manner that the wives will become pure (ἁγιάση [5,26]) and also holy and blameless (ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος [5,27]). It is noteworthy that in three instances in Colossians and Ephesians holy and blameless are synonymous, parallel terms (Col 1,22; Eph 1,4 and 5,27).

In a fourth, righteousness and holiness are interchangeable terms (Eph 4,24). In the three other places, purity/holiness is the goal (Col 3,12; Eph 5,26,27). Furthermore, in a more collective and communal sense, the Christian community constitutes a pure, select community in both books. In Col 3,12 it is the elect, holy, beloved community; in Eph 2,21, the temple of God. Both books espouse a community “beyond reproach” (Col 1,22). In ANE cultures, the temple was where God dwelt when on Earth. In Judaism especially, Yahweh was thought to reside in a room designated as “the Holy of Holies” (e.g., Exod 26,33-34). This place was so sacred that only the high priest was allowed in it and then only on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). In the book of Ephesians, the people Christian were so pure that God dwelt within them (2,22), i.e., the Christian community was the temple. Furthermore, it was not simply a temple but “a holy temple” (2,21).

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It is clear from these passages throughout the book of Ephesians that holiness is one of the best adjectives, if not the best, to describe the Christian

(6) This is a superlative form of *hosios*, a synonym of *hagios*.

lifestyle. Moreover, it is consistent with the description of the Christian as elect, holy, and blameless in Col 1,22 and 3,12. Therefore, my translation of ἅγιος as an adjective in Col 1,2 and Eph1,1 is totally consistent with the theological perspective of both books (?).

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### SUMMARY

The preceding study has demonstrated that from grammatical, linguistic, theological and literary perspectives, the best translation of ἅγιος in Col 1,2 and Eph 1,1 is as an adjective.

(?) Many have correctly argued that Colossians is the primary template for Ephesians. Two fine examples are C.L. Mitton, *Ephesians* (NCB; Grand Rapids, MI, 1976) 11-13; M.Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians* (Sacra pagina 17; Collegeville, MN, 2000) 4-6.

## Israelite Sheepshearing and David's Rise to Power (\*)

“Wherever sheepshearing is mentioned it marks an important epoch”<sup>(1)</sup>. So state the *midrashim*<sup>(2)</sup>. Yet, more than marking important epochs, biblical sheepshearings share a number of peculiar characteristics that require explanation. For example, in each of its four appearances, sheepshearing provides the setting for avenging a wrong: (1) Jacob takes what rightfully belongs to him for tending Laban's flocks (Genesis 31); (2) Tamar lures Judah into a sexual encounter to secure her rightful progeny (Genesis 38); (3) David seeks compensation for protecting Nabal's flocks (1 Samuel 25); and (4) Absalom kills Amnon for raping his sister, Tamar (2 Samuel 13). In addition, three of these narratives relate to David: Genesis 38 explains how the royal clan came into existence; 1 Samuel 25 describes how David obtained property and wealth near Hebron; and 2 Samuel 13 reports how Absalom killed the heir to his father's throne. What is more, the one narrative not directly connected to David (Genesis 31) reads a lot like one that is (1 Samuel 25). Rarely, if ever, are such narrative connections meaningless. Yet, what is their significance?

A close analysis of the biblical text reveals that sheepshearing in ancient Israel was much more than a pastoral duty; it was a significant celebration, characterized by feasting, drunkenness and the settling of old scores. As a result of these associations of revelry and revenge, sheepshearing became an ideal backdrop — both literary and actual — for events in Israel's past involving the repayment of debts or the righting of wrongs. Because both David and Absalom took advantage of sheepshearing for this purpose — and, in the process, aided their own ascents to power — sheepshearing became intimately associated with the establishment of the Davidic dynasty, even providing the narrative backdrop for the emergence of the royal clan.

### 1. Textual Analysis

Because the narratives in Samuel contribute the most to our understanding of sheepshearing in ancient Israel, we begin there.

#### a) David and Nabal (1 Samuel 25)

In 1 Samuel 25 we encounter Nabal, an extremely wealthy man who owns three thousand sheep, one thousand goats, and has the means to employ professional shearers (vv. 2.7). During the time of shearing, David sends

(\*) I want to thank Catherine Muldoon of Boston College for providing research assistance during the final stages of writing. Any errors that remain are strictly my own.

(1) GenR 74,5. The text is *בכל מקום שנאמר מוזה עושה רושם*, literally, “In every place that sheepshearing is mentioned, it makes a mark”. While *עושה רושם* can also mean “has a bad result” (cf. GenR 43,6), the intention of GenR 74,5 is to describe the event's significance, not its negative effects. Cf. M. JASTROW, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York 1950) I, 230.

(2) Cf. GenR 85,6; MSem 23,9.

messengers to Nabal to request meat as compensation for his protection of Nabal's flock (vv. 5-8). Nabal refuses, asking why he should give to David and his men food intended for his shearers (v. 11). David's subsequent militaristic response (v. 13), Abigail's intervention (vv. 18-31) and God's vindication of David (vv. 37-38) are well known and not central to our investigation. What is central, however, are the several clues in the text that indicate sheepshearing was a significant event in ancient Israel.

Our initial clue is found in the words of David's messengers when explaining the timing of their request: "for we come on a good day", (sic) *כי על-יום טוב* בו (v. 8). The exact meaning of this statement is unclear. Rashi held that the *יום טוב* of this passage was Israel's spring New Year's festival<sup>(3)</sup>, and the biblical text provides some justification for this interpretation. The only other occurrences of this phrase in the Bible are in Esther (8,17; 9,19,22), where its connections to an actual festival are explicit<sup>(4)</sup>. Rosenthal, however, has argued that the use of *יום טוב* to designate a festival is postbiblical (probably Maccabean), and that during the biblical period it merely denotes "a merry day of plenty"<sup>(5)</sup>. Whatever the precise meaning of *יום טוב*, the size and significance of Nabal's sheepshearing is further indicated by its comparison to "the feast of the king" (*כמשה המלך*) (v. 36)<sup>(6)</sup>. Part of what makes Nabal's sheepshearing on par with royalty is the abundance of both food and alcohol. Thus, when Abigail sets out to intercept David, she finds at her disposal "two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred fig cakes" (v. 18). Then, upon her return, she forbears telling Nabal about her rendezvous with David, since he was "extremely drunk" *שכר עד-מאד* (v. 36).

Of course, if this was our only evidence for the activities surrounding sheepshearing, then we might ascribe Nabal's excesses to the debauchery of "a fool"<sup>(7)</sup>. However, as the next narrative makes plain, such excesses were an integral part of Israelite sheepshearings.

#### b) David and Absalom (2 Sam 13,23-29)

We encounter sheepshearing again during the reign of David, when Absalom holds his own feast. As before, the size and significance of the event are betrayed by the narrative details. Absalom, like Nabal, hires professional

<sup>(3)</sup> Rashi remarks, "It was the New Year and [David's servants] said, 'and we require the festival meal'", *ראש השנה היה וצריכין אנו לסעודת יום טוב*, where *ראש השנה* refers to the first of Nisan (see Rashi's comments on 1 Kgs 6,1). See also, *Roš. Haš.* 1,1.

<sup>(4)</sup> A. CAQUOT – P. DE ROBERT, *Les Livres de Samuel* (CAT 6; Genève 1994) 308. Cf. *מגדים טובים*, "good festivals" (Zech 8,19).

<sup>(5)</sup> F. ROSENTHAL, "*yôm tôb*", *HUCA* 18 (1944) 157-176.

<sup>(6)</sup> Although most translations render the phrase *המלך כמשה* adjectively (i.e., "a royal feast"), the author may have intended it literally (i.e., "like the feast of the king"). The syntax of the phrase (construct with the definite article), as well as the use of *המלך* ... elsewhere (see, for example, 1 Kgs 10,13; Esth 1,7; 2,18; Dan 11,36; 2 Chr 29,15; 30,6; 35,10, 16), favors the latter understanding. As we will see in a moment, the royal house did celebrate such a feast.

<sup>(7)</sup> So G. ROBINSON, *Let Us Be Like the Nations*. A Commentary on the Books of 1 and 2 Samuel (Grand Rapids 1993) 136: "[Nabal's] folly was coupled with addiction to alcohol".

shearers (v. 24a)<sup>(8)</sup>. In addition, just as Nabal's sheepshearing is likened to "the feast of the king", so Absalom's sheepshearing is an event worthy of the king and all the male members of the royal house (v. 24b). What's more, Absalom's feast, like Nabal's, involves heavy drinking. In fact, Absalom's plot to avenge his sister's rape assumes the drunkenness of its participants<sup>(9)</sup>. As Absalom says to his servants, "See now, when Amnon's heart is good with wine (רָאוּ נָא כְּטוֹב לִבְאַמְנוֹן בַּיַּיִן) and I say to you, 'Strike Amnon', then you shall put him to death" (v. 28).

As a final observation: both sheepshearings in Samuel involve the demise of drunken participants whose deaths aid the protagonists in their ascent to the throne: David gains land and livestock in Hebron, his future capital, and Absalom eliminates the heir to his father's throne, placing himself next in line. We will consider the significance of these events after evaluating sheepshearing in Genesis.

### c) Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38)

Following the death of his wife, Bathshua, and the requisite period of mourning, Judah departs for Timnah, where, like Nabal and Absalom, he has hired professional shearers (v. 12b)<sup>(10)</sup>. On his way, Judah is attracted to and has a sexual encounter with a woman whom he believes to be a prostitute, but who, in fact, is his daughter-in-law, Tamar. As security for future payment, the disguised Tamar demands Judah's seal, cord and staff (vv. 17-18) — all symbols of clan authority and, in the case of Judah, royal authority. Tamar becomes pregnant with twins, thereby securing the progeny wrongfully denied her by her father-in-law. As Judah admits: "She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to Selah" (v. 26).

While Judah's escapade with a harlot might strike the modern reader as peculiar, perhaps an Israelite audience, aware of the licentiousness surrounding sheepshearing, viewed his behavior as more in keeping with the season. If this is so, then the notice that Judah was on his way to shear his sheep is just as important to Tamar's plan as the direction of his travel (to Timnah). Such a hypothesis makes sense of Tamar's promiscuous stratagem, as well as Judah's uninhibited response: הִבְהִינָה אֵבְרָא אֵלָיִךְ ("Come now! Let me enter you").

<sup>(8)</sup> The hiring of professional shearers by the royal house is understandable in light of the importance of wool to ancient economies. In this regard, "shearers" are found on provision lists from Ugarit (UT, 1084,30; 1099,4.26), and a comparison of their wages indicates they were quite valuable to the royal court. In Mesopotamia, "shearers" are also listed on the royal payroll (GCC I 93,3), and mention is even made of a shearing sponsored by the royal house (*Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of James B. Nies* [New Haven 1917] I, 14, 17). Cf. the present-day *Royal Command Shearing Performance* in Napier.

<sup>(9)</sup> On the similarities between Nabal's and Absalom's shearings, see, e.g., CAQUOT — DE ROBERT, *Les Livres de Samuel*, 500.

<sup>(10)</sup> The information regarding the time interval between Bathshua's death and Judah's sheepshearing, besides making Tamar's ruse possible (Judah is now "available") assures the reader that Judah's mourning is complete, allowing him to participate in the festivities of sheepshearing. By contrast, that Nabal would still celebrate sheepshearing (1 Sam 25,2), when the rest of Israel was presumably mourning the death of Samuel (1 Sam 25,1), was viewed by later commentators as further evidence of Nabal's base character (see, for example, MShem 23,8).



Also noteworthy are the several connections between Judah's daughter-in-law, Tamar, and the Judahite king's (David's) daughter, Tamar. First of all, recompense for the violations against both Tamars is obtained during the time of sheepshearing: Tamar deceitfully lures Judah into a sexual encounter in order to secure her rightful offspring, while Absalom deceitfully lures Amnon to his sheepshearing to avenge his sister's rape (Gen 38,12; 2 Sam 13,23). In addition, both Tamars are involved in incestuous relationships: the former with her father-in-law, the latter with her half-brother<sup>(11)</sup>. Indeed, even David's sheepshearing exploits may have resulted in an incestuous union, if, as some have suggested, Abigail is David's sister (cf. 1 Chr 2,16)<sup>(12)</sup>. As a final observation, the firstborn of Judah's sheepshearing encounter with Tamar is Perez, David's (and the latter Tamar's) progenitor, connecting three of the four sheepshearing narratives to David and the royal house<sup>(13)</sup>.

d) Jacob and Laban (Genesis 31)

While many are familiar with the story of Jacob's escape from his father-in-law, Laban, few take note of the time of Jacob's departure: sheepshearing (vv. 19-20). Jacob's choice of sheepshearing is understandable if our earlier observations regarding the festive nature of this event and the resulting incapacity of its participants are accurate<sup>(14)</sup>. Laban is eventually informed of Jacob's escape, and he pursues and overtakes Jacob at Gilead (vv. 22-23). Following Laban's unsuccessful search for his stolen *teraphim*, Jacob becomes angry and protests his unfair compensation for tending Laban's flocks (vv. 36-42). After making a covenant with Laban, Jacob leaves with his two wives, his children, and the many goods he acquired in Paddan-Aram.

As noted earlier, this story shares a number of features with one of the Davidic sheepshearings: the story of Nabal. First, both Nabal and Laban are presented as wealthy, but tightfisted flock owners (Gen 31,6-7.14-16.41-42; 1 Sam 25,3.14-17.21)<sup>(15)</sup>. Corresponding to this, both Jacob and David have a gripe about being unfairly compensated for care of another's flock (Gen

<sup>(11)</sup> For similar observations, see B. JACOB, *Genesis*. Das erste Buch der Tora (Berlin 1934) esp. 1048-1049; J. BLENKINSOPP, "Theme and Motif in the Succession History (2 Sam XI:2ff) and the Yahwist Corpus", *Volume du Congrès. Genève, 1965*. (VTSup 15; Leiden 1966) 44-57; G.A. RENDSBURG, "David and His Circle in Genesis XXXVIII", *VT* 36/4 (1986) 438-446, esp. 444; Craig Y.S. Ho, "The Stories of the Family Troubles of Judah and David: A Study of Their Literary Links", *VT* 49 (1999) 514-531.

<sup>(12)</sup> See J. D. LEVENSON – B. HALPERN, "The Political Import of David's Marriages", *JBL* 99 (1980) 507-518.

<sup>(13)</sup> This list does not include the many parallels between Judah and David in general: Judah lives in Adullam (Gen 38,1), just as David lives among the outlaws in Adullam (1 Sam 22,1); Judah has a Canaanite friend named Hirah (Gen 38,1), just as David establishes an alliance with the Canaanite king, Hiram of Tyre (2 Sam 5,11); Judah's wife is referred to as Bathshua (Gen 38,2.12), recalling David's wife Bathsheba, who is elsewhere referred to as Bathshua (see, for example, 1 Chr 3,5). For additional parallels, see G.A. RENDSBURG, "Biblical Literature as Politics: The Case of Genesis", *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East* (ed. A. BERLIN) (Bethesda 1996) 47-70. See also Ho, "Family Troubles", 514-529.

<sup>(14)</sup> Cf. the remarks of G. VON RAD, *Das Erste Buch Mose* (ATD; Göttingen 1953) 268.

<sup>(15)</sup> That their names are the reverse of each other (נבאל/לבל) is also likely significant and was observed by early rabbinic commentators. Cf. Yalq, Samuel I,134.

31,38-42; 1 Sam 25,21)<sup>(16)</sup>. What is more, both Jacob and David seek recompense for their services during the time of sheepshearing and leave these encounters with two wives: Jacob with Rachel and Leah, and David with Abigail and, by means of narrative placement, Ahinoam (1 Sam 25,43).

Finally, both narratives contain the motif of servants escaping from their masters. This theme is self-evident in Genesis 31: Jacob, who has served Laban for twenty years, chooses the time of sheepshearing to make his escape. In the David and Nabal narrative this motif does not come from the storyline, but rather from Nabal's mouth when denying David's request for food. After his proverbial retort, "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse?" (cf. 2 Sam 20,1; 1 Kgs 12,16), Nabal makes the somewhat cryptic statement: "Today the servants who are breaking away — each from the presence of his master — have multiplied", היום רבו עבדים המהפצים איש מפני אדניו (1 Sam 25,10). That this comment is not simply a slighted remark at David for fleeing from Saul is demonstrated by Nabal's reference to the number of servants and masters affected by this "breaking away". That is, Nabal's description and Jacob's actions could very well represent the state-of-affairs during sheepshearing. After all, the release or escape of slaves in connection with certain festivals (especially springtime festivals) is well attested in other ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean Basin cultures<sup>(17)</sup>, including Israel<sup>(18)</sup>.

## 2. Sheepshearing and the "Pāraṣ-ing" Nature of the Davidides

David's association with those "breaking away" (המהפצים) from their masters during sheepshearing highlights a subject requiring attention before concluding our study. McCarter has suggested that Absalom invited the royal family to his sheepshearing to kill not only Amnon but also David<sup>(19)</sup>. That Absalom had his eyes on the throne becomes clear with his subsequent revolt, and that even David is suspicious of Absalom's intentions in inviting him is indicated by David's refusal to attend (2 Sam 13,25), as well as by his questions regarding the need for Amnon to attend (v. 26)<sup>(20)</sup>. With these observations in mind, it seems significant that Absalom does not merely "ask" David to attend his sheepshearing, but rather twice "prevailed upon him" (lit. "broke out upon him"), ויפריצו (2 Sam 13,25,27). Most commentators

<sup>(16)</sup> For similar observations, see M. GARSIEL, *The First Book of Samuel. A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies, and Parallels* (Ramat-Gan 1985) 122-133.

<sup>(17)</sup> For the manumission of slaves during spring festivals, see J.B. SEGAL, *The Hebrew Passover. From the Earliest Times to A.D. 70* (London 1963) 119-120.

<sup>(18)</sup> Cf. the Passover, a spring festival involving the release of slaves (Israel) from bondage (in Egypt). One might also add the *privilegium paschale* described in the gospel accounts (Matt 27,15; Mark 15,6). The possibility that Israelite sheepshearing is the shepherding festival long hypothesized by scholars (see, e.g. R. DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel. Religious Institutions*, [New York 1965] II, 489) as the precursor to the Passover deserves further attention.

<sup>(19)</sup> McCarter conjectures: "Seizing the occasion of a sheepshearing feast, Abishalom issues an invitation to the royal family that, if accepted, will put them in his power. We cannot be sure that the king's courteous but negative response is cautionary, but it is probable that David already suspects Abishalom's ambition and fears him on that account", (P.K. MCCARTER, *I-II Samuel* [AB 3; Doubleday 1970] 334).

<sup>(20)</sup> Cf. MCCARTER, *I-II Samuel*, 334 and CAQUOT – DE ROBERT, *Les Livres de Samuel*, 500.

attribute the presence of ויפָרַן in these verses to scribal error (*metathesis*), arguing that the text originally read ויפָרַן-בו, “and he pleaded with him”<sup>(21)</sup>. That they are not alone in this expectation (cf. LXX, 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, Syr. and OL) should not surprise us. Yet, it is the unexpected ויפָרַן that seems the preferred reading, since, *lectio difficilior* aside, the verbal root פָּרַן plays an important role in the other Davidic sheepshearings. In 1 Samuel 25, David is accused by Nabal of being among those “*pāraš*”-ing from their masters during the time of sheepshearing (v. 10). This is understandable since he is a descendant of a certain *Pereš* who was conceived during the time of sheepshearing and who was himself a “*pāraš*”-er (Gen 38,29), an action that secured his right to be the progenitor of the royal clan. Later, David is “*pāraš*”-ed upon by his own son, Absalom (after all, he is a *Pereš*-ite, too), in connection with a sheepshearing (2 Sam 13,25.27), and in what seems to be an attempt at securing (perhaps even seizing, had David attended the shearing) his father’s throne.

Yet, the connections do not end here. We will recall a text that is peculiar in isolation, but that takes on new significance in light of the present study. In 2 Samuel 14 we are informed of Absalom’s appealing physical characteristics, among which is his voluminous hair (vv. 25-26). He is said to have had such thick hair that he shaved it the same time each year: the start of spring (מִקֵּץ יָמִים לִימִים) – the same time sheep were shorn in ancient Israel<sup>(22)</sup>. The weight of his hair is even calculated in *šēqālīm*, just like his ovine counterpart<sup>(23)</sup>. Furthermore, he is described as “without defect” (בְּרוּרָה, לֹא-דָוִידָה), a fitting victim for the ensuing slaughter<sup>(24)</sup>. In fact, it is likely Absalom’s unshorn hair that proves his downfall when “his head” gets caught in a tree and he is run through by the blades of Joab and his men<sup>(25)</sup>. The mode

<sup>(21)</sup> See, e.g. J. WELLHAUSEN, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis* (Göttingen 1871) 188; MCCARTER, *1-II Samuel*, 330; CAQUOT – DE ROBERT, *Les Livres de Samuel*, 500; Cf. 1 Sam 28,23 and 2 Kgs 5,23 for פָּרַן in similar contexts.

<sup>(22)</sup> S. HIRSCH, *Sheep and Goats in Palestine* (Tel Aviv 1933) 29. Spring shearing seems to have arisen from the natural molting of primitive and undomesticated sheep that occurs during this season. Another reason for spring shearing is that the warming weather lessens the likelihood of illness to the bare flocks.

<sup>(23)</sup> It is noteworthy that the average annual yield of wool from an adult ram in Israel is 2.25 kg. (HIRSCH, *Sheep and Goats*, 18), roughly equivalent to Absalom’s annual yield of two hundred shekels (2 Sam 14,26; although compare the “one hundred” of LXX and OL) or 2.2-2.6 kg. (see M.A. POWELL, “Weights and Measures”, *ABD* VI, 905-907). The comparison of Absalom to a member of the flock would not have been lost on an Israelite audience, making his earlier sheepshearing exploits and the circumstances surrounding his death all the more ironic.

<sup>(24)</sup> Cf. Deut 17,1, “You shall not sacrifice to YHWH your God an ox or a sheep in which there is a defect (דָּוִידָה בְּרוּרָה), anything bad, for that is an abomination to YHWH your God”.

<sup>(25)</sup> So Josephus (*Ant.* 7.239) and the Talmud (Sot 9b). Others have argued that it is not Absalom’s hair, but more generally his head, that is caught in the tree. See, for example, G.R. DRIVER, “Plurima Mortis Imago”, *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman* (eds. M. BEN-HORIN – B. D. WEINRYB – S. ZEITLIN) (Leiden 1962) 131. The question is over the meaning of “his head”, רֹאשׁוֹ. It seems significant that in the earlier description of Absalom’s annual shave that the text says he shaved “his head”, suggesting that שָׁעַר רֹאשׁוֹ and רֹאשׁוֹ (2 Sam 14,26) share a semantic (and, of course, an anatomic) field. If, in fact, Absalom is caught by his hair, then Absalom was coming due (or was past due) for his annual springtime shave. Further suggesting that this event occurred in the spring is that military engagements were usually initiated during this time of year.

of Absalom's death takes on added significance when we consider that it was likely in this same region (Ephraim) and at the same time of year (spring) that Absalom and his men ran Amnon through with their own swords<sup>(26)</sup>. Thus, the unshorn Absalom becomes a victim at his own game, and the Davidic sheepshearings come to a fitting end.

### 3. *Sheepshearing and the Davidic Throne*

When taken together, the biblical evidence presents Israelite sheepshearings as a time of trickery (Jacob surreptitiously escapes from Laban, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute, Absalom deceptively invites Amnon to his shearing), licentiousness (Judah has relations with a prostitute, both Nabal and Amnon drink to excess), and revenge (Jacob, Tamar, David and Absalom all seek recompense during sheepshearing) — giving Israelite sheepshearings an affinity with other ancient (and modern) springtime celebrations. Yet, what gave rise to the peculiar connection between sheepshearing and the Davidic throne?

One possibility is that sheepshearing, because of its associations with revelry and revenge, provided an ideal narrative backdrop for events from Israel's past requiring the vindication of wrongs or the repayment of debts. This model would help to explain why the Jacob and Laban narrative, which seems to have no immediate connection to David (though, see below), shares a number of parallels with the David and Nabal story. That is, the motif had a broader application than David. Yet, this explanation still does not account for all the data, especially why sheepshearing in its other three occurrences would be connected to David, even when one of these narratives appears in Genesis.

This leads to, what is to my mind, the most satisfying explanation of the evidence, the connections between sheepshearing and David arose from actual events (or, at least, well-established traditions) surrounding the establishment of the Davidic dynasty — events that might be reconstructed as follows: David, during his rise to power, acquired considerable territory and livestock from a wealthy landowner in Carmel during the celebrations of sheepshearing, a time of known excess and vulnerability. This acquisition provided David with an important foothold near his eventual capital, Hebron, and, following Levenson, may have even established him as the *rōš bêt 'āb* or *nāšî* of the Calebite clan<sup>(27)</sup>. Absalom also tried to benefit from the revelry and vulnerability of sheepshearing (like father, like son) by eliminating the heir to the throne and, had David attended, perhaps even carrying out a coup. Either of these events, and certainly the combination of the two, could have given shape to the traditions concerning Perez, who was conceived during the

<sup>(26)</sup> The locations are "Baal-Hazor near Ephraim", בַּעַל הַחֹזֶר אֶשֶׁר עַם-אֶפְרַיִם (2 Sam 13,23) and "the forest of Ephraim", בֵּיַעַר אֶפְרַיִם (2 Sam 18,6), respectively. Admittedly, this connection is textually based, as the precise location of the forest of Ephraim — whether it is east or west of the Jordan (or both, as suggested by Josh 17,14-18) — is unknown, as is the question of whether or not the "Ephraim" of 2 Sam 13,23 should be understood as "Ophrah". For discussion, see Henry O. THOMPSON, "Ephraim", *ABD* II, 556; "Ephraim, Forest of", *ABD* II, 557.

<sup>(27)</sup> J.D. LEVENSON, "1 Samuel 25 as Literature and as History", *CBQ* 40 (1978) 26-27.

time of sheepshearing and whose actions at birth to secure the right of primogenitor – and, by implication, to sire the royal clan (Gen 49,10; cf. Ruth 4,18-22; 1 Chr 2,4-15) — helped to account for the “*pāraṣ*”-ing nature of the Davidides in their early struggles for the throne (1 Sam 25,10; 2 Sam 13,25.27)<sup>(28)</sup>.

Such a reconstruction of events might also explain the several parallels between the Jacob/Laban and David/Nabal sheepshearing narratives. In particular, an event from David’s life has found expression in the ancestral history. After all, a number of episodes from David’s life mirror those of the Patriarchs, especially Jacob<sup>(29)</sup>. For instance, both Jacob and David have daughters (Dinah and Tamar, respectively) who are victims of sexual aggression and whose vindication results in the removal of two brothers (Simeon and Levi, in the case of Jacob; Amnon and, eventually, Absalom, in the case of David) from the line of succession<sup>(30)</sup>. Additionally, both Jacob and David have sons (Reuben, in the case of Jacob; Absalom and, in a manner, Adonijah, in the case of David) who take their fathers’ concubines, again with consequences for the throne<sup>(31)</sup>. In the end, it is the “fourth” son of both Jacob and David (Judah and Solomon, respectively) who secures the right to rule over his brothers<sup>(32)</sup>. Whether the allusions to David’s life in the ancestral history were intended as a further apology for his or a later Davidide’s (e.g., Solomon’s) ascent to power, or whether they were intended as a further critique of that ascent, is unclear. My sense, based on both the noble and ignoble actions recorded for the Patriarchs and the early Davidides, is that the biblical authors were content with the ambiguities<sup>(33)</sup>. The establishment of the Davidic dynasty was, in a word, “complicated”, and the account of this period — both in Genesis and Samuel — reflects this reality.

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<sup>(28)</sup> The author’s innovation was not David’s affiliation to the Perešite clan but the wordplay on the clan name to characterize the Davidides’ behavior.

<sup>(29)</sup> For the parallels between David and the Patriarchs in general, see the discussion and bibliography in R. DE HOOP, “The Use of the Past to Address the Present: The Wife-Sister Incidents (Gen 12,10-20; 20,1-18; 26,1-16)”, *Studies in the Book of Genesis. Literature, Redaction, and History* (ed. A. WÉNIN) (BETL 155; Leuven 2001) 359-69. For the parallels between Jacob’s and David’s lives, see, most recently, R.E. FRIEDMAN, *The Hidden Book in the Bible. The Discovery of the First Prose Masterpiece* (San Francisco 1998) 37-44.

<sup>(30)</sup> For the many thematic and linguistic parallels between the Dinah and Tamar stories, see D.N. FREEDMAN, “Dinah and Shechem, Tamar and Amnon”, *God’s Steadfast Love. Essays in Honor of Prescott Harrison Williams, Jr.*, Austin Seminary Bulletin 105.2 (1990) 51-63; also published in *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation* (Grand Rapids 1997) 485-95. Cf. J.A. EMERTON, “Judah and Tamar”, VT 29 (1979) 403-415.

<sup>(31)</sup> Solomon uses Adonijah’s request for Abishag (1 Kgs 2,13-25) as justification for his execution.

<sup>(32)</sup> Whatever Solomon’s actual birth order, he is presented in Samuel-Kings as the fourth son in contention for the throne.

<sup>(33)</sup> Cf. M.E. BIDDLE, “Ancestral Motifs in 1 Samuel 25: Intertextuality and Characterization”, *JBL* 121/4 (2002) 617-638.

## SUMMARY

An analysis of the relevant texts (Genesis 31; 38; 1 Samuel 25; 2 Samuel 13) reveals that sheepshearing in ancient Israel was a significant celebration characterized by feasting, heavy drinking, and the settling of old scores. As a result of these associations, sheepshearing became an ideal backdrop for events in Israel's past involving the repayment of debts or the righting of wrongs. Because both David and Absalom took advantage of sheepshearing for this purpose — and in the process aided their own ascents to the throne — sheepshearing became intimately associated with the emergence of the royal clan (Genesis 38) and the establishment of the Davidic dynasty.

## **The Question of Indirect Touch: Lam 4,14; Ezek 44,19 and Hag 2,12-13**

This article aims to highlight the relevance of Lam 4,14 for interpreting Hag 2,12-13 with regard to the issue of the transference of a ritual state via indirect touch<sup>(1)</sup>. Until now, Ezek 44,19 has been considered to offer the only parallel to Hag 2,12-13. In my view, however, Lam 4,14 provides not only an additional but also a closer parallel. There are significant similarities between these three texts. Throughout this article, we shall explore two particular areas of resemblance: transference of a ritual status via indirect touch, with clothes forming the medium for this transference, and the role of the priests as the chief agents in the transfer of status.

### **I. Direct and indirect touch**

The three texts Hag 2,12-13, Ezek 44,19 and Lam 4,14 share the idea of transference of a ritual status via indirect touch. Furthermore, clothes are the medium of the transmission in every case. Through a close reading of the three texts, we shall discover that Hag 2,12-13 contradicts Ezek 44,19 but agrees with Lam 4,14.

#### **1. Hag 2,12 and Ezek 44,19**

Hag 2,12-13 depicts two scenarios. The first one (v. 12) involves a person who carries holy meat in his clothes, and whose clothes come into contact with bread, stew (נייד), wine, oil or any other kind of food. With regard to this possibility, Haggai asks whether the clothes transmit holiness (היקדש - *Qal*). This single question implies a two-step process: first, whether or not the holy meat transmits its status to the clothes, and second, whether or not the clothes transmit their (potential) status to the other food-stuff. The priests respond negatively. This response, however, is ambiguous in that we cannot, on the basis of Hag 2,12 alone, determine whether it refers to both or only to the second part of the process, i.e. whether or not the holy meat transmitted its status to the clothes. In order to reach a better understanding of the issue, we need to look beyond the book of Haggai to Lev 6,20. This verse states that sacrificial meat, i.e. meat that is has been sanctified and thus is holy, will render anyone who touches it holy (כל אשר יגע בבשרה יקדש - *Qal*)<sup>(2)</sup>. Thus, combining the two texts, we can conclude that it is the second step that malfunctions: holiness can render something else holy, but only via direct touch.

Haggai's second scenario involves another two-step process (v. 13). This

<sup>(1)</sup> I am indebted to my colleague Dr. P.J. Williams who weeded out more than one linguistic infelicity.

<sup>(2)</sup> Cf. J.G. BALDWIN, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (TOTC; Leicester 1972) 50.



time, however, we learn more. First, we learn that a person has become unclean owing to contact with a carcass. We therefore know that the ritual status has progressed from the carcass to the person touching it, and accordingly Haggai's question concerns only the second step—whether or not this person can transfer his or her ritual status of impurity to the same items as the previous case (הַיָּמָא - *Qal*). The answer is positive.

This second legislation is confirmed by several Pentateuchal texts. In particular, Lev 11 informs us that the dead bodies of certain animals can render a person or item unclean (טָמֵא) by touch (vv. 24–28 – see also Lev 5,2–4; Num 5,2). Interestingly, Lev 11,28 decrees that the person who has come into contact with a dead animal must wash his clothes (יִכְבֶּס בְּגָדָיו). This, in my opinion, suggests a situation similar to the one in Hag 2,13: clothes pick up the impurity of their wearer and they can transfer it further.

To conclude, the two questions in Hag 2,12–13 concern, among other things, the ability of a certain ritual status to pass on its qualities<sup>(3)</sup>. According to the priests' ruling in this passage, impurity is stronger than holiness: holiness can only transfer its status via direct touch, while impurity can transfer its status also via indirect touch, in this particular case via clothes.

Several scholars recognize the comparative value of Ezek 44,19 (cf. 42,13) to Hag 2,12–13 with regard to the concept of indirect transition of a ritual state<sup>(4)</sup>. Ezek 44,19 commands the priests to remove the clothes they have worn during the temple service before entering into the outer courtyard lest the priests sanctify the people by letting their clothes accidentally touch them (וְלֹא יִקְדְּשׁוּ אֶת הָעָם בְּבִגְדֵיהֶם). There are similarities as well as differences between the two texts. Both texts deal with indirect touch, but they differ with regard to its effect: while Ezek 44,19 states that the clothes, having become sanctified through the temple ritual, have the power to transfer the ritual state of holiness to the people, Hag 2,12 explicitly states that they do not have that power.

Are we then dealing with a contradiction? In order to determine this issue, we have to discuss two aspects of the texts. First, what, if any, is the significance of the fact that the two texts contain two different verbal forms of the root קִדַּשׁ? Second, are the two texts compatible, i.e. does Ezek 44,19 really deal with indirect touch?

#### a) Grammatical Concerns

Ezek 44,19 and Hag 2,12 differ with regard to the verbal conjugation of the root קִדַּשׁ used. Ezek 44,19 attests the *Piel* form with the active meaning “to sanctify”, while Hag 2,12, as well as Lev 6,20, uses the *Qal* form of the same root, which often denotes the stative meaning “to be consecrated”.

<sup>(3)</sup> Normally, the binary opposites are pure/impure and profane/holy (cf. Lev 10,10; Ezek 22,26). Yet, sometimes these two sets overlap. Deut 14, for example, states that Israel is holy (v. 2) and should not eat any abominable things (v. 3) which are later described as impure (v. 10).

<sup>(4)</sup> E.g. J. KOOLE, *Haggai* (CNT(K); Kampen 1967) 77, who argues that the ruined state of the temple and the supposed resulting freer usage of sacrificial meat account for the discrepancy, P.A. VERHOEF, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI 1987) 118, and J. KESSLER, *The Book of Haggai*. Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud (VTSup 91; Leiden 2002) 204, n. 52. None of these scholars explore the idea in any deeper sense.

In the case of Ezek 44,19, we read that *וְלֹא יִקְדְּשׁוּ אֶת הָעָם בְּבגְדֵיהֶם* (= “and [the priests] will not sanctify the people with their clothes”), reflecting the following syntactical structure.

“The priests” are the formal subject of the verb “to sanctify”; “their clothes” are the instrument, i.e. the tool with which the priests would sanctify the people; “the people”, i.e. the ones in danger of being sanctified, are the direct object.

From a less formal point of view, the clothes do the actual sanctification and can thus be understood to be the real agent: the danger is that the priests’ clothes, while the priests move about in the courtyard, might come into contact with the people and transfer their ritual status to them.

The syntactical structure of Hag 2,12 is similar to Ezek 44,19: the person carrying the meat, probably to be identified as a priest (see further below), is the subject of the verbs *וַיִּנָּע* and *וַיִּשָּׂא*; “the meat” is the direct object of these verbs; “the folds”, the tool with which a person could sanctify someone / something else, is the instrument.

The main syntactic difference between the two texts lies in denoting the object, i.e. the persons / items at risk touching the sanctified item. Rather than forming the direct object as in Ezek 44,19, “the bread” and “the stew” etc. form collectively the subject of the stative meaning of the verb *יִקְדָּשׁ*. Thus, like Ezek 44,19, Hag 2,12 implies that these items are in danger of being sanctified, but it uses a stative rather than an active sentence structure. Accordingly, we can best translate the expression *וַיִּנָּע בְּכַנְפּוֹ אֶל הַלֶּחֶם [...] יִקְדָּשׁ* [...] as “and touches the bread [...] with his clothes; does [the latter entity in question] become sanctified?”

To sum up, Ezek 44,19 and Hag 2,12 refer to the same topic, namely the potential sanctification of a person or an item via indirect touch. The use of two different verbal conjugations merely reflects syntactic differences and, as such, there is no need to look for a variance in meaning. Furthermore, even though the priests are the formal subject of the verb “to sanctify” in Ezek 44,19, it is their clothes that are responsible for the transmission of the ritual status, as also in Hag 2,12. Hence, the ritual status of the wearer of the clothes is in these two particular cases immaterial.

#### b) Exegetical Concerns

Our next issue concerns the source of the sanctification of the priests’ clothes in Ezek 44,19: are the priests’ clothes holy owing to their coming into contact with holy items whilst being worn in the sanctuary, or are the clothes holy in their own right? In other words, does Ezek 44,19 really speak of secondary touch or does it, as some scholars argue, speak only of primary touch?

It is doubtful whether we can distinguish between the level of holiness between the priests’ clothes that have become sanctified through prolonged exposure to holy items in the course of the priests’ temple service (Ezek 44,19), and the priest’s clothes that have been exposed to holy items in the more limited form of one piece of sanctified meat carried in the clothes (Hag 2,12). Instead, the two cases are parallel: the priests’ clothes have become sanctified via primary touch in both cases, and both cases deal with the power of these clothes to pass on their acquired but not innate ritual status.

Accordingly, we have a clear contrast: Ezek 44,19 claims that the clothes can convey their status and Hag 2,12 claims that they cannot.

In order to solve this impasse, scholars have come up with tentative solutions to this contradiction. Kessler, for example, suggests three potential explanations without going into further details: a) the existence of a diversity of priestly opinions; b) the priestly response in Hag 2,13 is primarily redactional, dramatic, and literary, inserted for the sake of setting up the analogy of v. 14; c) the legislation in Ezek 44,19 was either unknown to the priests in Haggai or regarded as future and eschatological legislation<sup>(5)</sup>.

All three explanations have merit. Nonetheless, the first and the third explanations are the more viable ones: it is possible that the priests in Judah around 520 BC would differ from the exilic prophet Ezekiel in their view of the transmittance of holiness, either in open defiance of each other or due to lack of knowledge of an alternative standpoint.

Furthermore, given the fact that the material in Ezek 40-48 concerns the future, it is possible that Haggai and the priests, assuming that they were familiar with the material in question, regarded it as irrelevant for the legislation of contemporary matters of ritual. The second option is less likely, insofar as it is based on the view that Hag 2,10-14 is a literary product with no foundation in an actual encounter between the prophet and the priests: this option suggests that Haggai's oracles were first and foremost written compositions rather than spoken oracles, a view that receives no support from the text of Haggai itself.

To conclude, Hag 2,12 and Ezek 44,19 contradict each other with regard to the ability of something holy to render something else holy via indirect touch. Thus, we lack a definite resolution of the issue of indirect touch. With this lack in mind, we now turn to the third passage with bearing on the issue of indirect touch, namely Lam 4,14.

## 2. Lam 4,14

Lam 4,14 is part of a longer section (vv. 13-16) that blames the leadership for the fall of Jerusalem. The leaders, identified with the priests and the prophets in verse 13 and with the priests and the elders in verse 16, are described as having shed the blood of innocent persons in the past and as currently wandering blind in the streets. Our present interest primarily concerns 14b. A close analysis of its syntax, vocabulary and context will reveal affinities with Hag 2,12-13. In view of these affinities, I suggest that Lam 4,14 has a bearing upon the interpretation of Hag 2,12-13.

### a) Syntactical concerns

In order to interpret Lam 4,14 (בלא יוכלו יגעו בלבשיהם) correctly, we must first identify the people involved: who are the subject of the 3 m. pl. verbs יוכלו and יגעו in 14b, and to whom does the possessive suffix in בלבשיהם ("their clothes") refer? In the case of the two verbs, it is preferable to regard their subject as the common people of Jerusalem, their presence being assumed although not explicitly mentioned<sup>(6)</sup>. This identification is suggested

<sup>(5)</sup> KESSLER, *Haggai*, 204, n. 52.

primarily by the appearance in the following verse 15 of a 3 m. pl. verb קרא the subject of which must be a group of people distinct from the priests and the prophets. It receives further support from the imagery in verse 18, which alludes to a situation where the speakers cannot walk in the street for fear of persecutors (?). In contrast to this, the possessive suffix in בלבשיהם refers most naturally to the priests, the main subject of the preceding 14a. In view of this, I suggest translating 14b as “without [the people of Jerusalem] being able to touch<sup>(8)</sup> the [priests’] clothes”.

#### b) Exegetical concerns

Next, we need to define the precise interpretation of the phrase נִאֲלָו בָּדָם, used to describe the priests and the prophets in 14a. While the general meaning of the verb נָאֵל is not disputed, stemming from the root נָאֵל II and having connotations of “defilement”, its exact form and its precise semantic meaning in Lam 4,14 are unclear.

With regard to its form, the consonantal form clearly denotes a Perfect *Niphal*, but the vocalization fits a Perfect *Pual*. Thus, this is probably a mixed form, where the punctuation intended to combine the two optional readings *Niphal* and *Pual*<sup>(9)</sup>. In any case, the meaning is passive and, as such, denotes that the priests and the prophets are “defiled” by blood.

With regard to its meaning, the question here is whether the phrase נִאֲלָו בָּדָם is a matter of physical dirtiness or whether it is a ritual matter. In order to answer this question, I shall define the meaning of the root נָאֵל II where it occurs elsewhere, and, based on the result, I shall argue for the same to be true also in the case of Lam 4,14.

The exact same phrase is found elsewhere in Isa 59,3 (with the same mixed pointing)<sup>(10)</sup>. In this verse, the expression is used figuratively to indicate the extent of the sins of the persons involved. Zeph 3,1 contains a clear *Niphal* form of נָאֵל II where it is again used figuratively, as indicated by

<sup>(6)</sup> Most major Biblical translations, e.g. BBE, KJV, JPS, NAB, TNK, adhere to this reading, as do grammar books, e.g. GKC §120g, and the majority of critical scholars, e.g. A. BERLIN, *Lamentations* (OTL; Louisville, Kentucky 2002) 101-102. The alternative, i.e. to regard the priests as the subject throughout the passage, has also been advocated. For example, W. RUDOLPH, *Das Buch Ruth. Das Hohe Lied. Die Klagelieder* (KAT 17; Gütersloh 1962) 246, renders the phrase as “besudelten sich mit was sie nicht durften, berührten sie mit ihren Kleidern”, but he also acknowledges that the phrase can equally well be translated as “so daß man ihre Kleider nicht berühren konnte”. He is followed by, among others, B. ALBREKTSON, *Studies in the Text and theology of the Book of Lamentations* (Studia Theologica Lundensia; Lund 1963) 187, who translates the phrase as “what they were not allowed, they touched with their clothes”. Thus, Albrektson regards the phrase as meaning that the priests cannot avoid contact with unclean things. While grammatically possible, it makes little sense exegetically, given the context. The priests are unclean (v. 15), not their surroundings.

<sup>(7)</sup> PROVAN, *Lamentations*, 118, 121-122.

<sup>(8)</sup> In the grammatical construction in which two verbs in the same mood follow each other without a copula, the second verb carries the main idea. See further GKC §120g.

<sup>(9)</sup> Following GK §51h. See also D.R. HILLERS, *Lamentations* (AB7a; Garden City – New York 1972) 90, I. PROVAN, *Lamentations* (NCBC; London 1991) 82.

<sup>(10)</sup> For a short discussion of the form and the comparative value of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, see P. WERNBERG-MØLLER, “Studies in the Defective Spelling in the Isaiah-Scroll of St Mark’s Monastery”, *JSS* 3 (1958) 249.

the following verse 2 that refers to Jerusalem's disobedience to God. In neither of these cases does the root  $\text{נָּאָל}$  II imply physical dirtiness but denotes instead matters of guilt and sin, matters that are often regarded as ritual in the Hebrew Bible<sup>(11)</sup>. Similarly, the *Pual* form occurs in Ezra 2,62 // Neh 7,64 and Mal 1,7, again with ritual connotations, as can be inferred from the fact that all the texts concern ritual matters and they all feature priests as the key players. Similarly, the *Hithpael* form in Dan 1,8 refers to Daniel's refusal to "pollute" himself by eating of king Darius' food, again a matter of ritual. In view of this, we can conclude that the word "defile" has definite ritual connotations.

The only possible exception is Isa 63,3, part of the longer passage of Isa 63,1-6, that attests the *Hiphil* form<sup>(12)</sup>. In this exegetically difficult passage, God is described (in the first person) as a killer who has "defiled" His clothes with the blood of His victims. This verse contains several parallels to Lam 4,14: the main characters in both cases are killers, and in both cases their clothes are described as "defiled". Given these similarities, we have to determine whether the root  $\text{נָּאָל}$  II in Isa 63,3 and, as a result, also in Lam 4,14, defines a person whose clothes have simply become physically dirty, or whether these two verses speak about ritual defilement.

In my view, the second interpretation is more likely for the following reasons:

— Given the connotations of defilement, ritually and/ or figuratively, of the root  $\text{נָּאָל}$  II elsewhere, this is likely to be the case for the root also in Isa 63,3 and Lam 4,14.

— It is probable that the particular choice of the root  $\text{נָּאָל}$  II in Isa 63,3 was guided by the use of the orthographically and phonetically identical root  $\text{נָּאָל}$  I in the following verse 4<sup>(13)</sup>. As such, the use of the root  $\text{נָּאָל}$  II in this context is not primarily due to semantic considerations. Accordingly, it would be incorrect to derive too much information about the meaning of the root from this specific instance.

— Along the same lines, I suggest that had the author of Lam 4,14 intended to convey an impression of regular dirt, he would have used a less ritually loaded word.

— Blood by itself can have a contaminating function, as is the case of blood lost through childbirth or menstruation (e.g. Lev 12,1-8; 15,19-23; 15,25-30). More pertinent for the present inquiry is the fact that bloodshed is deemed unclean: shedding (innocent) blood causes guilt (Deut 21,7b-8a -  $\text{דָּם}$ ). In the particular cases of Isa 63,3 and Lam 4,14, this legislation is apt: both

<sup>(11)</sup> The Hebrew Bible does not differentiate clearly between impurity and sin. Rather, as L.E. TOOMBS, "Clean and Unclean", *IDB* 1, 647, argues, moral and religious sin was seen as a form of inner uncleanness. E.g., the case of suspected adultery, a clear case of *sin*, was treated as a problem of *uncleanness* (Num 5,28). Furthermore, Isa 30,22; Ezek 24,13; 36,25; 37,23, show that pagan idols and cult practices associated with them rendered Israel unclean, and the ritual of the Day of Atonement removed simultaneously the accumulation of guilt ( $\text{חַטָּאת}$ ) of both sin and uncleanness (Lev 16,16.30).

<sup>(12)</sup> For the form, see GKC §53p, and J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66* (AB 19b; New York 2003) 246, n. j.

<sup>(13)</sup> Cf. K. KOENEN, *Ethik und Eschatologie im Tritojesajabuch. Eine literarkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie* (WMANT 62; Tübingen 1990) 78.

God and the Jerusalemite leadership have blood on their clothes owing to killing, and I suggest that it is the blood, i.e. the result of the shedding of blood, that in both cases causes the clothes to become ritually defiled. Furthermore, the legislation in Lev 6,20 (cf. above) may also be relevant: the blood from the sacrifices must be washed away from the priests' clothes in a holy place. Thus, blood *per se* has ritual significance and can influence the ritual status of something else.

In view of these arguments, I conclude that the blood on the priests' and on the prophets' clothes in Lam 4,14 has ritual significance: the clothes are described as "defiled", implying all the ritual connotations the root can have.

### c) Contextual concerns

The interpretation of the phrase נָאֵל בָּרָם in Lam 4,14 as referring to the priests' and the prophets' ritual defilement is also strengthened by its immediate context. The speakers in the following verse 15, identified with the people of Jerusalem (cf. above), command the priests and the prophets to "get out of the way". Further, they call the priests and the prophets "unclean" and tell them "not to touch" (אַל תִּגְעוּ). I suggest that the repeated use of the *Qal* form of the root נָגַע in verses 14 and 15 indicates that the message of the two verses is, to a certain extent, parallel. As such, verse 15 can shed light upon the interpretation of Lam 4,14. In verse 14, the people of Jerusalem cannot touch the priests' clothes, and in verse 15, the people of Jerusalem are commanding the priests not to touch (anything). In verse 15, the ban against touching is followed by the declaration of the priests' unclean status: they are טָמֵא, i.e. they are "unclean". It stands to reason that they cannot be touched because they are unclean. Further, given the overall similarity between verses 14 and 15, we are justified in assuming that the same is true for verse 14 as well. Hence, I suggest that the statement that the priests' clothes are "defiled by blood" implies that the clothes are made "unclean" by blood.

### 3. Conclusion

So far, we have learnt that Lam. 4,14-15 describes a situation where the priests' and the prophets' clothes were ritually defiled, and where, probably because of this defilement, the people of Jerusalem could not touch the clothes. Moreover, the people of Jerusalem declare the priests and the prophets as unclean. If we take these facts together, I propose that we have here yet another example of transmittance of impurity via indirect touch. In this case, the priests' and the prophets' clothes have been defiled by the (figurative) blood upon them, the blood that was spilt (v. 13b) as a result of their sins and iniquities (v. 13a)<sup>(14)</sup>. These impure clothes in their turn have the ability to render anyone who touches them impure, and that is the reason why the people of Jerusalem cannot touch them.

<sup>(14)</sup> This interpretation has already been hinted at by BERLIN, *Lamentations*, 101-102, n. i, who writes that the people have to avoid contact with the bloodstained clothing of the priest and prophets because this clothing is now "contaminated and would render impure anyone who touched it".

As we can see, what we have here in Lam 4,14 is a situation akin to the scenario described in Hag 2,12-13: clothes have been made impure owing to contact with something impure – a corpse in the case of Hag 2,13 and blood guilt in the case of Lam 4,14. Moreover, both texts agree that impurity can be transmitted via indirect touch. As we shall see in greater detail shortly, this similarity has implications for the interpretation of Hag 2,12-13.

## II. Priests

A precursory reading of the texts reveals that Hag 2,12-13, Ezek 44,19 and Lam 4,14 share a connection to priests. This connection is natural: the issues of purity and impurity are closely connected with the priestly office. Lev 22,15-16, for example, states that the priests were responsible for teaching the laws of purity to the people as well as for ensuring that they were maintained.

A closer reading of the three texts reveals a more nuanced picture. In this section, we shall explore the connection to priests as found in the three texts and their immediate contexts and conclude that they differ in their respective estimate of the priests: while Ezek 44,15-31 testifies to a favourable assessment of the priests, Lam 4,13-16 and Hag 2,10-14 disclose a more critical disposition towards them.

### 1. Priests in Hag 2,10-14

Hag 2,11-13 tells how Haggai posed two questions to the priests. We can relate to Haggai's questions and the presence of priests in this text in one or two ways:

— Haggai asked the priests in their role as experts on purity. As such, Haggai's questions express his genuine search for enlightenment<sup>(15)</sup>.

— Haggai asked the priests in order to emphasize a certain fact in his own argumentation<sup>(16)</sup>. As such, Haggai knew the answers to the questions beforehand.

The second option is preferable for two reasons: From an exegetical point of view, the questions in Hag 2,12-13 are of such a simple character that any layperson would have been able to answer them correctly<sup>(17)</sup>. Hence, it is unlikely that Hag 2,12-13 reflect a quest for knowledge.

<sup>(15)</sup> E.g. T.T. PEROWNE, *The Books of Haggai and Zechariah* (CB; Cambridge 1908) 39-40, C. VON ORELLI, *Die zwölf kleinen Propheten* (KKANT; München 1908) 171, W.A.M. BEUKEN, *Haggai-Sacharja 1-8. Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der frühachexilischen Prophetie* (SSN; Assen 1967) 65, H.W. WOLFF, *Dodekapropheten 6 Haggai* (BKAT; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1986) 70, VERHOEF, *Haggai*, 116, H.G. REVENTLOW, *Die Propheten Haggai, Sacharja und Maleachi* (ATD; Göttingen 1993) 25, and E.M. MEYERS, "The use of Tora in Haggai 2:11 and the Role of the Prophet in the Restoration Community", *The word of the Lord shall go forth. Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman* (ed. C.L. MEYERS – M.P. O'CONNOR) (Winona Lake, IN 1983) 69-75.

<sup>(16)</sup> RUDOLPH, *Haggai*, 48-49, BALDWIN, *Haggai*, 50, P.L. REDDITT, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (NCBC; Grand Rapids 1995) 26, 27. See also KESSLER, *Haggai*, 213, who treats Haggai's question as a "prophetic-symbolic action", the goal of which is to "baffle the hearers and thereby stimulate their curiosity".

<sup>(17)</sup> E. SELLIN, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch* (KAT 12; Leipzig 1930) 463. His suggested interpretation (that there was a difference in opinion between the priests and Haggai



From a structural point of view, the general structure of the section Hag 2.10-14 as a whole suggests that verse 14 is the culmination of the preceding inquiry. First, the occurrence of the root *שׁמׁ* in both the inquiry (v. 13) and in the following prophetic oracle (v. 14) binds the two together. Second, the word *כֵּן* (“thus”, v. 14) indicates a comparison with the previous material. Thus, Hag 2.14 is most likely the conclusion of the preceding inquiry (vv. 12-13), and thus dependent on its content<sup>(18)</sup>. This in turn renders the latter scenario the more plausible one: what we have here is a carefully crafted text where the prophet used the form of inquiry as a platform upon which to build his oracle<sup>(19)</sup>. Hence, it is unlikely that Haggai approached the priests in search of knowledge. Instead, by asking rhetorical questions, he sought to bring a particular issue to light.

Given this conclusion, it is further possible to detect a critical disposition towards the priests in Hag 2.10-14 as a whole. We know from other texts that the priests were responsible for teaching the laws of purity to the people as well as for ensuring that they were maintained (cf. Lev 22.15-16). Thus, I suggest that the involvement of the religious authorities in his argumentation was one way in which Haggai emphasized the clergy’s involvement and thus also their responsibility for the people’s current impurity (v. 14).

### 2. Priests in Ezek 44.15-31

Similarly to Hag 2.12-13, the earlier text of Ezek 44.15-31 focuses on the priests but without the critical tone of the former. On the contrary, the passage begins by lauding the Zadokite priests for serving faithfully in the sanctuary when the rest of the people of Israel fell away from God. Accordingly, the focal point of the oracle is the priests and their privileges and obligations. At the same time, there is, as in Hag 2.10-14, a concern for the people: the priests should take care lest they transfer their ritual status to anyone else (v. 19), and they are required to teach the people about things holy and profane, about impurity and purity (v. 23). On this basis, I propose seeing Ezek 44.15-31 as pre-emptive of the situation in Hag 2.10-14: the priests should endeavour both to teach the people about ritual issues to ensure that the people remain pure, and to make certain that they themselves do not convey their own ritual status to the people.

### 3. Priests in Lam 4.13-16

Lastly, the earliest text of the three — Lam 4.13-16 — is again critical of the priests. The lamenters identify the priests, alongside the prophets, as those

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concerning the participation of the Samaritans in the temple building), however, cannot be accepted.

<sup>(18)</sup> Cf. KESSLER, *Haggai*, 201, 204. Yet not all scholars agree with this. BEUKEN, *Haggai*, 70, for example, opposes the idea that the prophet is interested in ritual issues. Instead, he argues that the torah given by the priests (vv. 12-13) functions merely as a link to the actual issue, being God’s authority. Beuken’s assumption concerning Haggai’s indifference towards ritual matters is, however, purely conjectural. Furthermore, his claim that the questions and answers in Hag 2.12-13 are merely a matter of determining God’s authority, without any significance for the following oracle in verse 14, is not convincing.

<sup>(19)</sup> Cf. K. KOCH, “Haggais unreines Volk”, ZAW 79 (1967) 61.

carrying the main responsibility for Jerusalem's downfall: the priests' past crime caused innocent blood to flood in the city. As a result, the priests, rendered impure by the spilt blood, now wander blindly in the streets (v. 14), without a rightful place to live in (v. 15), and without being shown any deference (v. 16).

To sum up, when we compare the involvement of the priests in the three texts, we find again, as in the case of indirect touch, that Lam 4,14 and Hag 2,10-14 agree with each other against Ezek 44, 15-31: while Lam 4,13-16 and Hag 2,10-14 share the concepts of priestly guilt and of resulting impurity, Ezek 44, 15-31 speak of a blameless clergy.

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We have seen that Hag 2,12-13 and Lam 4,14 agree with one another in two areas: both texts claim that impurity can be transferred via indirect touch, and both texts hint at a critical disposition towards the priests, claiming that their behaviour is connected with either their own impurity or that of the people. In contrast, Ezek 44,19 presents a more positive estimate of the priests, contrasting their behaviour favourable with that of the people. Furthermore, Ezek 44,19 disagrees with Hag 2,12 concerning the matter of holiness. While Ezek 44,19 declares that holiness can be transferred through indirect touch, Hag 2,12 states that it cannot.

How, then, should we interpret these similarities and differences? The exilic Ezek 44,19 and the Judahite Lam 4,14 can be regarded roughly as contemporary with one another, and they present two related cases: Lam 4,14 claims that impurity can be transmitted via indirect touch, and Ezek 44,19 gives us a corresponding example of holiness being transmitted via indirect touch.

There are two plausible scenarios: it is possible that we have here an example of an inner-Biblical development of a concept and, as such, also an inner-Biblical revision<sup>(20)</sup>. The later text of Hag 2,12-13 would then evaluate both traditions, side with the tradition preserved in Lamentations and reject the tradition in Ezekiel: impurity can be transmitted via indirect touch but holiness cannot. Taken in conjunction, Hag 2,12-13 also sides with the critical evaluation of the priests preserved in Lamentations against the more favourable evaluation in Ezekiel.

Alternatively, we may assume that Hag 2,12-13 was familiar with the tradition in Lam 4,14 but not with the one in Ezek 44,19. Accordingly, Haggai follows the tradition of Lam 4,14 with regard to the transmission of impurity, but adheres to a tradition at variance with the one preserved in Ezek 44,19 with regard to the transmission of holiness. Furthermore, Haggai follows the

<sup>(20)</sup> Concerning the term "revision", I follow Sommer's definition and use of the term (B.D. SOMMER, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*. Allusion in Isaiah 40–66 [Contraversions; Stanford, California 1998] 25-28). According to Sommer, revision occurs when a later Biblical text restates some aspects of an earlier text while altering elements of the message of the older text, or adding to the earlier message. This happens most frequently in legal codes where earlier laws are rewritten and largely replaced. Thus, in the present case, the negative ruling of the later Hag 2,12 replaces the positive ruling of the earlier Ezek 44,19.

critical appraisal of the clergy as attested in Lamentations whilst remaining unaware of the alternative, more favourable appraisal in Ezekiel.

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## SUMMARY

This article compares Lam 4,14; Ezek 44,19 and Hag 2,12-13 with regard to the transference of impurity and holiness via indirect touch. Lam 4,14 forms an apt parallel to Hag 2,13 in that both texts claim that impurity can be transmitted via indirect touch. In contrast, Ezek 44,19 contradicts Hag 2,12 concerning the transmission of holiness. The discussion focuses mainly on the translation of Lam 4,14, with specific attention to the interpretation of the verb נָסַח, the uses of the root קִדַּשׁ in Hag 2,12 and Ezek 44,19, and finally considers whether or not Ezek 44,19 refers to indirect touch.

## Yahweh Gears Up for Battle: Habakkuk 3,9a

The MT of Hab 3,9a reads: עָרִידָה תַּעֲוֹר קִשְׁתְּךָ // שְׁבָעוֹת מִפְּוֹת אֶמֶר<sup>(1)</sup>. F. Delitzsch once opined that the second colon of this verse may be the most difficult passage in Habakkuk if not in the entire prophetic corpus<sup>(2)</sup>. More recently D. Pardee characterized it as “one of the most difficult verses of the Hebrew Bible”<sup>(3)</sup>. Whether the problematic nature of this passage is overstated in these comments or not, it is certainly a text that has proven to be resistant to all efforts at elucidation. Of the two cola that make up this bicolon, the more troublesome is clearly the second, in particular the last word.

The context of the passage provides some help for making sense of it. The second part of v. 8 mentions the horses and the “victorious chariot” (מִרְכַּבְּתֶיךָ יִשְׁעָה) that Yahweh mounts as he prepares to do battle with Sea/River (v. 8bα)<sup>(4)</sup>. Since v. 9a comes just after this colon, it is likely that it continues the theme of gearing up for battle. The fact that “your bow” (קִשְׁתְּךָ) occurs in the first colon of v. 9a sets up the reader to expect a continuation of the preparation for battle motif in the second colon. The occurrence of more weapon vocabulary in this colon — viz., מִפְּוֹת<sup>(5)</sup> — indicates that such an expectation is well founded.

### 1. The First Colon

The meaning of the first two words in the first colon of 3,9a is somewhat controverted. According to the MT the second word, the verb, is a form of the root עוּר, “to rouse, awake,” which is supported by Codex Barberini, Syr, and Vg. This form is sometimes explained by claiming that עוּר here is a by-form of the root עָרִי<sup>(6)</sup>, “to be bare, naked”<sup>(7)</sup>. But no other occurrence of this alleged root is attested in Hebrew. As for עָרִידָה, as vocalized in the MT it is a

<sup>(1)</sup> For purposes of discussion I omit here the סֵלָה at the end of this colon.

<sup>(2)</sup> Cited in T. HIEBERT, *God of My Victory: The Ancient Hymn in Habakkuk 3* (HSM 38; Atlanta 1986) 26.

<sup>(3)</sup> D. PARDEE, “The Semitic Root *mrr* and the Etymology of Ugaritic *mr(r) ll brk*”, *UF* 10 (1978) 262 n. 78.

<sup>(4)</sup> The placement of the word-pair מִרְכַּב וְסוּס (Isa 2,7; Jer 4,13; Mic 5,9; Nah 3,2; Hag 2,22) in two cola, with סוּסִיךָ in the first colon and מִרְכַּבְּתֶיךָ in the second, causes some awkwardness. In no case should one read the bicolon as if it meant that Yahweh mounted the horses, but rather that he mounted his horse-drawn chariot. Here either מִרְכַּבְּתֶיךָ should be read as מִרְכַּבְּתֶיךָ (the singular) or one should understand the plural as some kind of elative construction. As Hiebert comments: “It is best to understand this bicolon as containing ‘imagistic parallelism’ . . . in which the poet does not seek to refer to two separate acts but to a single act described with two related images” (*God of My Victory*, 24).

<sup>(5)</sup> The correctness of this assertion does not depend on how one translates this term, i.e., whether as “maces” or “arrows”.

<sup>(6)</sup> I designate the last radical of the root by a *yod* rather than a *he* in order to distinguish the third-weak root from a root in which the third radical is a consonantal *he*, not the *mater lectionis*, such as נָהָה, נָהָה, etc.

<sup>(7)</sup> BDB, 735.

noun meaning “bareness, nakedness”<sup>(8)</sup>. Such a reading is viable, since the use of a noun with a cognate verb to intensify the verb is attested in biblical Hebrew<sup>(9)</sup>. But it is probably not the original reading.

The problems of this colon can be resolved by postulating the following textual history of these two words. (1) They originally read *עָרָה הָעָרָה*. The first word is the Piel infinitive absolute of *עָרָה* and the second is the normal Piel 2nd masculine singular *yiqtol* form of this root. (2) At some point the final /ē/ of the first word, a Piel infinitive absolute, was written *šere* + *yod* rather than *šere* + *he*, a rare spelling of this form in the MT<sup>(10)</sup>. A similar phenomenon, however, is seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls in the case of the construct of third-weak nominal forms<sup>(11)</sup>. (3) The resulting *עָרָה הָעָרָה* then suffered a scribal error: a copyist inadvertently placed the final *he* on *הָעָרָה* at the end of *עָרָה*, which resulted in *עָרָה הָעָרָה*. The same error is attested elsewhere in the MT<sup>(12)</sup>. (4) Later, *הָעָרָה* was supplied with a vowel letter yielding *עָרָה הָעָרָה* (= MT).

The expression “to bare one’s bow” is best taken to mean removing the bow from a bow case or some type of container so that it is ready for use in battle. In this connection Hiebert points out that in the Late Bronze and early Iron Age “chariots were outfitted with bow cases and quivers to carry weapons not in use”<sup>(13)</sup>. *עָרָה* is used in this sense with reference to another armament, a shield, in Isa 22,6<sup>(14)</sup>. One might translate v. 9aα in idiomatic English, “You withdrew your bow (from its case)”, which fits well with the reference to the war-chariot in v. 8.

## 2. The Second Colon

When we turn to the second colon of this line (v. 9aβ), we note that each of its three words has been the subject of extensive discussion. The challenge of solving the dilemma posed by this colon is to come up with a solution in which (1) there is minimal change to the text (i.e., the MT), (2) any changes are plausibly explained, (3) all three words bear a meaning that is not forced, (4) the proposed translation fits well in the immediate context of the poem, and (5) the proposed restoration is in accordance with the conventions of biblical Hebrew poetry.

<sup>(8)</sup> In the MT this word occurs also in Mic 1,11; Ezek 16,7.22.39; 23,29.

<sup>(9)</sup> See GKC §117q (“internal object”).

<sup>(10)</sup> Note the Piel infinitive absolute *הָעָרָה* for *הָעָרָה* in Hos 6,9. See GKC §231 and H. BAUER – P. LEANDER, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache* (Tübingen 1922) 424.

<sup>(11)</sup> Qumran Hebrew frequently spells the construct of third-weak noun forms with *šere* + *yod* rather than *šere* + *he*—i.e., the construct of nouns ending in *-eh* is written *-ēy* more frequently than *-ēh*. See E. QIMRON, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (HSS 29; Atlanta 1986) §100.34 (p. 20).

<sup>(12)</sup> A classic example of this error is *בִּקְשׁוּ פָנַי*, “seek (plural) my face”, in Ps 27,8. This reading is impossible in the context. It is insane to think that the psalmist would ask God to seek *his* face or that he would address the deity with a 2nd plural verb. Rather, the *waw* at the end of *בִּקְשׁוּ* should be placed at the end of the following word. The two words then read *בִּקְשׁוּ פָנָיו*, “seek (singular) his (i.e., God’s) face”, which makes perfect sense and is the commonly accepted reading (see the critical apparatus in *BHS*).

<sup>(13)</sup> *God of My Victory*, 26, referencing Y. YADIN, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archaeological Study* (2 vols.; New York 1963) I, 88, 212, 214-15, 240-41.

<sup>(14)</sup> HALAT, 834.

The first word is, according to the MT, שְׁבַעַת (lit., “oaths”). Yet virtually all modern interpreters rightly agree that this reading is a poor fit in the context and reject it<sup>(15)</sup>. Several of the versions point to a reading שְׂבַעַת. The LXX reads ἑπτά, (“seven”) and Barberini ἐχόρτασας (“you have sated”). The former reflects a derivative from the root שָׂבַע and the latter from the root שָׂבַע.

Some commentators have gone with the derivation from the verbal root שָׂבַע. HALOT recommends that of the various proposals for the reading of this colon “first consideration should be given” to “two which remain particularly close to MT”<sup>(16)</sup>, both of which support this derivation. The first was proposed by F. Horst: שְׂבַעַת מִשּׁוֹת הָאֵמָר, “Pfeilflüche sprichst du”<sup>(17)</sup>. The second was suggested by A. Keller: שְׂבַעַת מִשּׁוֹת אֵמָר “Tu conjures les javelots avec des paroles”<sup>(18)</sup>. Yet neither of these can be correct because both give an unlikely translation of שָׂבַע. The root means “to swear, to take an oath”. It is true that in some contexts it can mean “curse”, but only in a very restricted sense. It can only designate a curse in the sense of a self-imprecation, an oath which has been broken by the one who swore it. The term is precisely equivalent to Akkadian *māmītu*. The CAD’s translation of the latter term is instructive for the understanding of Hebrew שְׂבַעַת: “1. oath . . . sworn agreement, 2. curse (consequences of a broken oath attacking a person who took it . . .)”<sup>(19)</sup>. That is, the oath can become a curse only upon one who has taken and then broken it. It is not transferrable to other persons and, *a fortiori*, is not applicable to inanimate objects such as weapons.

Several versions read the verb in question as a derivative of שָׂבַע, “to sate” — i.e., Barberini and Syr. Barberini reads ἐχόρτασας βολίδας τῆς φαρέτρας αὐτοῦ (“You have sated the shafts of his [*sic*] quiver”). Syr translates with a 3rd plural form of שָׂבַע: *wnsbʿwn gʾrʾ bmʾmrk* (“And [your] arrows were sated with your word”), possibly reading the MT’s שְׂבַעַת as a Qal passive participle modifying מִשּׁוֹת. Most frequently שָׂבַע is used of dry land to denote abundant watering or of human beings to denote fullness, satiety after eating or drinking. From this derive various figurative uses, in which one is sated with (long) life or with various positive or negative emotions — bitterness, joy, love, etc. The only use of שָׂבַע in the MT with a weapon is Jer 46,10, where the sword is said to “devour” (וַאֲכָלָה), “be sated” (וַשְׂבַּעָה), and “drink its fill” (וַיִּרְוָה). The image here is clearly based on the idiom of a person being sated with food or drink<sup>(20)</sup>. The verb is not used with arrows in the MT, but there is a similar usage with the verb שָׂכַר, “to be drunk”, which speaks of making one’s arrows “drunk with blood” (Deut 32:42). So in theory a derivation from שָׂבַע is not wholly out of the question, especially in the sense of being sated with blood as Barberini seems to understand it. Syr’s translation, however, is quite unlikely, as the MT contains no examples of anything being sated with a “word”.

<sup>(15)</sup> A literal translation of the MT would be “the oaths of the tribes” (so *KJV*).

<sup>(16)</sup> HALAT, 1289; HALOT, 1385.

<sup>(17)</sup> T. ROBINSON – F. HORST, *Die zwölf Kleinen Propheten* (HAT 14; Tübingen 1954) 182.

<sup>(18)</sup> In R. VUILLEMIER – C.-A. KELLER, *Michée, Nahoum, Habacuc, Sophonie* (CAT 11b; Paris 1971) 172. But the Piel of this verb, which Keller reads here, is attested neither in biblical nor post-biblical Hebrew.

<sup>(19)</sup> CAD M/1, 189 (emphasis mine).

<sup>(20)</sup> The verb שָׂבַע occurs with אָכַל in this usage 25x in the MT.

Both of the derivations mentioned above read שבעה in our passage and parse it as a verb. But there is no certainty that it is a verb here; hypothetically אָמַר at the end of v. 9a could be the predicate in this colon. I agree with the LXX and a number of recent interpreters who take שבעה rather as שְׁבַעַה, the feminine construct form of the numeral “seven”<sup>(21)</sup>. Admittedly there is a problem with the form of the numeral here. In Hebrew numerals from one through ten, the feminine numeral is used with a masculine noun and vice-versa. Exceptions are rare, but three that are commonly noted also involve a feminine construct numeral preceding a feminine plural form: Gen 7,13; 1 Sam 10,3; Job 1,4<sup>(22)</sup>. Hence, although this usage is unusual it is not impossible; in general, unusual usages are more common in poetry than in prose.

The next word, מִצֹּחַת, is the least controversial term in this colon. In this context, in parallelism with קִשְׁתְּךָ, it is unlikely that it denotes a “staff” or a “tribe” but rather some kind of weapon. The question here is whether the weapon in question is a mace or an arrow. The former interpretation is based on Akkadian *miṭṭu* (“mace”), which appears frequently in Akkadian literature as a divine weapon<sup>(23)</sup>. But there appears to be no OT passage in which the Hebrew term must be translated “mace”. The most likely interpretation of מִצֹּחַת in Hab 3,9a is that it is a rare, poetic term for arrows. This interpretation finds support in the parallelism of Ugaritic *qšth* with *mṯm* in *KTU* 1.3 II 15-16, where the same weapons are mentioned, and where they are likewise those of a deity (Anat). Finally, Hiebert offers two further plausible reasons why “arrows” is the better option here.

The divine warrior is never pictured as carrying more than one mace into battle. Moreover, a mace would not “pierce,” *nqb*, the head of an enemy [3,14a], while arrows would<sup>(24)</sup>.

Thus the first two words of the colon are to be read as שְׁבַעַת מִצֹּחַת, “(your) seven arrows”.

### 3. *The Heart of the Crux: אָמַר*

We turn now to the most difficult term in the colon, אָמַר, which the MT points as אָמַר from I אָמַר, “to say”. No translation based on this derivation, however, yields good sense or fits well in the context. O’Connor reads it as a 1st singular verb from a putative root meaning “to see”<sup>(25)</sup>, a translation of this root proposed by M. Dahood which has found few adherents<sup>(26)</sup>. Instead of the troublesome אָמַר several commentators opt for אֶשְׁפֹּתְךָ (“your quiver”),

<sup>(21)</sup> J. DAY, “Echoes of Baal’s Seven Thunders and Lightnings in Psalm XXIX and Habakkuk III 9 and the Identity of the Seraphim in Isaiah VI”, *VT* 29 (1979) 143-51; M. O’CONNOR, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, IN 1980) 236; F. I. ANDERSEN, *Habakkuk* (AB 25; New York 2001) 312.

<sup>(22)</sup> GKC §97c; P. JOÜON – T. MURAOKA, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew: Part One: Orthography and Phonetics; Part Two: Morphology* (Subsidia Biblica 14; Rome 1991) §100d.

<sup>(23)</sup> CAD M/2, 147-48.

<sup>(24)</sup> *God of My Victory*, 28.

<sup>(25)</sup> *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 236.

<sup>(26)</sup> E.g., see M. DAHOOD, *Psalms I: 1-50* (AB 16; Garden City, NY 1961) 16, 24, 69.



appealing to Barberini's τῆς φαρέτρας αὐτοῦ ("his quiver")<sup>(27)</sup>. But this word agrees with אָמַר only with respect to the first consonant and thus is hardly a plausible restoration.

I propose that the solution to this *crux interpretum* is to postulate that the MT's reading אָמַר derives from an original תָּמַר (i.e., the Hiphil 2nd masculine singular *yiqtol* form of the verb מָרַר, "to be bitter"). The Hiphil of this verb occurs in only four OT passages, in all of which it denotes "bitterness" in an emotional sense, either anger (Exod 23,21) or depression (Zech 12,10 [2x]; Job 27,2; Ruth 1,20). But in this one text, and in this particular context, I believe it bears a more literal sense which can plausibly be argued on the basis of evidence I shall present below. I suggest that here it means to make one's arrows "bitter" in the sense of smearing them with bitter serpent's gall, a substance regarded as poisonous in the ancient world. Note that the motif of God shooting poisoned arrows at his enemies is attested in Job 6,4: "For the arrows of the Almighty are in me // my spirit drinks their poison [תִּמְקָחָם]" (RSV).

The scribal error that led to the MT's אָמַר was a confusion between the letters 'alep and tav at a certain stage of Hebrew paleography. S. Talmon was the first to draw attention to this phenomenon<sup>(28)</sup>, pointing out a number of examples in the pre-Aramaic script. Thus the MT's אָמַר resulted from the miscopying of an original תָּמַר. Vg may provide indirect evidence for the latter reading, with its translation of the word in question as *locutus es* ("you have spoken")<sup>(29)</sup>.

The credibility of the proposal that תָּמַר means "to (smear with) gall/poison" rests on the plausibility of translating the Hiphil of מָרַר in this way, a meaning not listed in any of the lexica of biblical or post-biblical Hebrew. In what follows I shall present evidence from biblical Hebrew, Ugaritic, Akkadian, and Syriac that this root refers in some texts to a poisonous substance and that this substance was widely used to poison projectiles used in battle.

#### 4. The Root מָרַר and Gall/Venom

In Job 20,14 Zophar mentions that one of the divine punishments of the wicked man is that "though evil tastes sweet in his mouth" (v. 12), "yet his food turns in his stomach // changing to *asps' venom* [מְרוּרַת פְּתָנִים] within him" (NEB). In an important treatment of this passage, D. Pardee observes that although a number of translations had rendered the Hebrew idiom in this way, none explained how מְרוּרַת, a nominal derivation from the root מָרַר with the

<sup>(27)</sup> Most recently HIEBERT, *God of My Victory*, 28.

<sup>(28)</sup> S. TALMON, "The Ancient Hebrew Alphabet and Biblical Text Criticism", *Mélanges Dominique Barthélemy: Études offerts à l'occasion de son 60<sup>e</sup> anniversaire* (ed. P. CASETTI et al.) (OBO 38; Göttingen 1981) 497-530. See also E. TOV, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis 2001) 244-45.

<sup>(29)</sup> On the one hand, Jerome may have had תָּמַר in his Vorlage, which he interpreted as an idiosyncratic writing of תָּמַר. A similar idiosyncratic writing of a 2nd masculine form of this root appears in 2 Sam 19,14, where the MT has תָּאמְרוּ לְהַמְרוּ ("you shall say"). On the other hand, in Jerome's Vorlage there may have been little or no space between the last two words in this colon (מִמּוֹת תָּאמַר), which he mistakenly read as מִמּוֹת תָּאמַר.

general meaning “bile” or “gall”<sup>(30)</sup>, could have the meaning “venom” or “poison”<sup>(31)</sup>. Pardee refers to E. Dhorme’s note on this passage in his commentary on Job: “Les anciens s’imaginaient que le venin était secrété par le vésicule biliaire des serpents”<sup>(32)</sup>, where *le venin* is to be translated “venom” rather than “poison”<sup>(33)</sup>. The clearest reference to the connection between serpent’s gall and venom in ancient times may be found in the writings of Pliny: “The most accurate authorities write that this [venom] is nothing else than serpents’ gall, and that the veins [or “ducts”?] pass from the gall-bladder under the spine to the mouth”<sup>(34)</sup>. This passage shows that as far as the ancients were concerned serpent’s gall and serpent’s venom were one and the same thing. This belief appears to have been common in the ancient world, predating Pliny by many centuries, and known to the inhabitants of the ancient Near East.

Pardee points to a number of ancient Semitic languages in which derivatives from the root *m-r-r* sometimes denote serpent’s gall/venom. He cites several Akkadian texts in which *martu* (“gall, bile”) has this meaning. One mentions a *šeru muttabbik martu*, “a serpent spitting gall/venom”<sup>(35)</sup>. In the lexical text *maliku = šarru* (VIII 124) *martu* is equated with *imtu*<sup>(36)</sup>, “slaver > venom > poison”. Other texts not cited by Pardee also associate these two terms. In one they are in parallelism: *ina šuprišu martum ittanattuk ki[bi]ssu imtu lemuttu*, “Gall constantly trickles from his (the demon’s) claws // his step (leaves behind) wicked venom”<sup>(37)</sup>. In another they are juxtaposed: *imat marti ša ilī šunu*, “They (the demons) are the poisonous venom of the gods”<sup>(38)</sup>. The Syriac derivatives *mērārā* (= Hebrew מְרֹרֵר) and *mertā*, although normally denoting “gall”, also mean “venom” in a number of texts<sup>(39)</sup>.

Finally, Pardee defends this sense of *m-r-r* in the Ugaritic incantation against serpent bite (*KTU* 1.100). There the following formula is repeated 11x in the text:

*mnt.nṯk.nḥš* Incantation (against) serpent bite,  
*šmrr.nḥš.ṣqr* (Against) the venom-injection of the scaly(?) serpent.

Although in Ugaritic there are two different roots underlying *m-r-r*, one meaning “to go away, eject” and a second meaning “to strengthen > bless(?)”<sup>(40)</sup>, in the *editio princeps* of this text C. Virolleaud derived *šmrr* from neither of these but rather from *m-r-r* = “to be bitter”<sup>(41)</sup>, a meaning

<sup>(30)</sup> I.e., because of its characteristic bitterness.

<sup>(31)</sup> D. PARDEE, “*mēmôrāt-pētānīm* ‘Venom’ in Job 20:14”, *ZAW* 91 (1979) 401-16.

<sup>(32)</sup> E. Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job* (Paris 1926) 268 n. 14.

<sup>(33)</sup> “*mērôrāt-pētānīm*”, 402 n. 6.

<sup>(34)</sup> Cited in “*mērôrāt-pētānīm*”, 412-13. “. . . Non aliud hoc [venenum] esse quam fel serpentium, et inde venas sub spina ad os pervenire diligentissimi auctores scribunt” (*Natural History*, XI §163).

<sup>(35)</sup> Ibid., 403. See CAD I, 139. The belief presumed here that *martu* comes out of the serpent’s mouth seems to suggest an identification of bile with venom.

<sup>(36)</sup> “*mērôrāt-pētānīm*”, 403. See CAD M/1, 297, 299.

<sup>(37)</sup> CAD I, 139.

<sup>(38)</sup> CAD I, 140, which translates “poisonous foam” rather than “poisonous venom”. A more literal translation would be “bilious venom”.

<sup>(39)</sup> “*mērôrāt-pētānīm*”, 410.

<sup>(40)</sup> See G. DEL OLMO LETE – J. SANMARTÍN, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* (trans. W. G. E. WATSON) (2 vols.; HdO 67; Leiden 2003) II, 577.

<sup>(41)</sup> C. VIROLLEAUD, *Ugaritica V* (ed. J. NOUGAYROL et al.) (Mission de Ras Shamra 16; Paris 1968) 601 (derives *šmrr* from the Š stem of *m-r-r*, “rendre amer”).

attested in Hebrew, Akkadian, Arabic, and Ethiopic<sup>(42)</sup>. While some have preferred to relate it to Ugaritic *m-r-r* I, “to eject”, Virolleaud and Pardee are no doubt correct in deriving it from the root sense “to be bitter”. Of the possible meanings of this root, the interpretation of *šmrr.nḥš* as “the serpent’s venom injection” best fits the context because of the parallel expression *nṯk.nḥš* (“the serpent’s bite”) in the previous line and *ḥmt* (“[the serpent’s] venom”) two lines later. Specifically, Pardee takes it as a nominal form of the Š stem of the verb, with the meaning “to make (something) bitter”, lit., “the causing of bitterness” > “the injection of venom”<sup>(43)</sup>. The existence of a Š stem form referring to the injection of serpent’s venom in Ugaritic, a Northwest Semitic language closely related to biblical Hebrew, is important insofar as the Ugaritic Š stem equates directly with Hebrew Hiphil and thus with the reading תִּמְרָר proposed above for Hab 3,9a.

### 5. The Use of Serpent’s Gall to Poison Projectiles

Thus far I have presented evidence from Pardee’s work to demonstrate a connection between the Semitic root *m-r-r* and serpent’s gall/venom. In the following paragraphs I will provide evidence from the pre-Christian period of the use of serpent’s gall as a poison — in fact, the poison of choice — with which to arm projectiles for use in battle. This substance was considered to be highly toxic and therefore particularly lethal.

Pardee cites several classical authors from the turn of the era who make reference to the widespread use in ancient times of serpent’s gall to poison arrows. In Virgil’s *Aeneid* the poet speaks of “an arrow . . . which, armed with [serpent’s] bile of dire venom, a Parthian . . . let fly, a missile (that inflicts an) incurable (wound)”<sup>(44)</sup>. In one of his works Ovid mentions certain tribes who carry around poisoned arrows: “Among them [the Sarmatae and Getae tribes] there is not one who does not bear quiver and bow, and darts yellow with viper’s gall”<sup>(45)</sup>. See also his comment in *Ex Ponto*: “(I live in the midst of enemies) who, to double with a cruel wound the causes of death, smear every dart with viper’s gall”<sup>(46)</sup>. Diodorus of Sicily makes the point that Heracles slew the Lernean hydra and poisoned his arrows with its gall: After he had killed the Lernean hydra, Hercules “dipped the heads of his arrows in the bile, in order that when the missile should be shot the wound which the point made might be incurable”<sup>(47)</sup>.

These ancient sources provide evidence of the widespread use of

<sup>(42)</sup> See H. RINGGREN, “מִרְרָר”, *TDOT* IX, 15.

<sup>(43)</sup> “*mērōrāt-pētānīm*”, 408.

<sup>(44)</sup> *Ibid.*, 413 (translation mine). “. . . sagitta, armatam saevi Parthus quam felle veneni . . . telum immedicabile, torsit” (*Aeneid* (XII 856-58). The text printed in Pardee’s article mistakenly has *armatum* for *armatam*.

<sup>(45)</sup> *Ibid.* “. . . in quibus et nemo, qui non coryton et arcum telaque vipereo lurida felle gerat” (*Tristia* V vii 15-16).

<sup>(46)</sup> *Ibid.* “. . . qui, mortis saevo gement ut vulnere causas, omnia vipero spicula felle linunt” (*Ex Ponto* I ii 13-16). Here *spicula* could also be translated “spear-” or “arrowheads”.

<sup>(47)</sup> *Ibid.*, 414. “. . . εἰς τὴν χολὴν ἀπέβαπτε τὰ ἀκίδας, ἵνα τὸ βληθὲν βέλους ἔχη τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἀκίδος πλῆγὴν ἀνίατον (Diodorus of Sicily IV xi 5-6). The translation in Pardee’s article has “venom” for χολή, but the term is more accurately translated “bile” here.

serpent's bile for poisoning missiles such as arrows and spears in warfare. Yet important as these witnesses are, they do not in themselves provide sufficient evidence to justify reading *ḫm* in Hab 3,9a and translating it "to (smear weapons with) poison". First, all are from the end of first century B.C.E. to first century C.E., and thus postdate the writing of Habakkuk by at least several centuries. Second, all of them come from the Greco-Roman world, not the Near East. Third, none of these sources contains a verb with the meaning proposed. To substantiate this hypothesis, one must adduce ancient Near Eastern texts that refer to poisoning weapons with serpent's gall. One should also be able to present evidence of a verbal use of the root *m-r-r* in association with projectiles in such texts.

Arming projectiles with serpent's gall is attested in ancient Akkadian literature. In the Old Babylonian version of the *Epic of Anzu* the goddess Belet-ili, Ninurta's mother, tells the warrior god: *tulul qašta šukudūka imta libillu*, "Draw (your) bow, let your arrows carry poison" (II 63)<sup>(48)</sup>. In the *Epic of Erra* (first millennium B.C.E.) Erra, the god of pestilence, *iṭāmi ana kakkēšu liṭpatā imat mūti* — "says to his (seven) weapons: 'Be smeared with deadly poison!'" (I 7)<sup>(49)</sup>. He then "determines the destiny" of each of the weapons. When he comes to the seventh the poet says, *sibā imat bašme iṣēnsuma šumqita napišta*, "He loaded the seventh (weapon) with viper's poison (saying), 'Strike down (every) living thing!'" (I 38)<sup>(50)</sup>.

These three passages are significant parallels to Hab 3,9a. All three are from mythological works and describe a deity acting as a god of war or pestilence. The *Anzu* text speaks of a god drawing a bow and poisoning his arrows, which is similar to Yahweh's baring his bow and poisoning his arrows in the Habakkuk text. The *Erra* passages are striking insofar as in both them and Hab 3,9a the protagonist is a god of pestilence<sup>(51)</sup> daubing his seven weapons with viper's poison in preparation for battle. It is plausible, in my view, that the "seven arrows" of Hab 3,9a reflect the imagery of this epic, given other striking connections between these two poems<sup>(52)</sup>. Relevant here too is the fact that *imtu* ("poison") in these three Akkadian passages is the cognate of Hebrew *חֲמָה*, the word used in Job 6,4 to refer to the poison from Yahweh's deadly arrows.

But one important piece of evidence is still missing: an ancient Near Eastern use of the verb *m-r-r* in the sense of poisoning weapons. That

<sup>(48)</sup> CAD Š/3 here (p. 228) reads the singular ("your arrow"), whereas CAD I reads instead the plural *šukudūka* ("your arrows") in the same passage (p. 140). The *u* ending on the verb *libillu* is clearly plural.

<sup>(49)</sup> L. CAGNI, *L'Épopée de Erra* (Studi Semitici 34; Rome 1969) 58. The next line contains the parallel to *ana kakkēšu*, namely *ana "Sibitti"*, "to the Sibitti/the Seven".

<sup>(50)</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>(51)</sup> For Yahweh as a god of pestilence in Habakkuk 3, note his connection with *ḫm* and *ḫm* in v. 5.

<sup>(52)</sup> I mention here the most striking verbal connection between Habakkuk 3 and the *Epic of Erra*, *l'ḫm ḫm ḫm* ("at the lightning-brightness of your spear") in Hab 3,11a and *ša . . . ana šubruq ulmēšu* ("who . . . when he makes his spears flash lightning") in *Erra* I 5. CAD Š/2, 331, translates *ulmēšu* "his axes", whereas CAD B, 104, translates "his lances"; cf. the translation "his spear" by B. R. FOSTER, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (2 vols.; Bethesda, MD 1993) II, 772. In either case, the term in both texts refers to a deity's weapon.

evidence has now been provided in a recent publication by a leading Assyriologist, W. Heimpel, who asserts that *marāru* (the Akkadian cognate of מרר) in the *D* stem means “to poison (weapons)” in a text from Mari (early eighteenth century B.C.E). In a letter to the king of Mari, a certain Buqaqum, mayor of Sapiratum, mentions recent hostilities with the Suteans. The latter had attacked a city in the district, and Buqaqum had subsequently made an incursion against them. In the context of this tense situation, he writes to the king: *šukurrīni i numarrir* <sup>(53)</sup> — lit., “We shall make our lance(s) bitter”. The verb is the *D* stem 1st plural present-future form of *marāru*. Heimpel asserts that “make bitter” in this passage means to smear the lances with poison in preparation for battle. He translates, “We shall poison our lances” <sup>(54)</sup>. He further comments: “I am sure that the ubiquitous technique of poisoning projectiles was used in Mari also” <sup>(55)</sup>.

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\* \*

In conclusion, the evidence from ancient classical and Near Eastern sources presented above justifies reading תמר in Hab 3,9a, which likewise has projectiles as its object, and translating it “to smear with (serpent’s) gall” = “to poison”. The complete bicolon is thus to be read and translated as follows:

ערה תערה קשתך // שבעת חפזות תמר

You removed your bow (from its case), // you poisoned (your) seven arrows.

The resulting bicolon is an excellent example of classical Hebrew poetry. It is a well balanced bicolon, each colon consisting of three short words. The verse exhibits syntactic chiasmus: predicate — object // object — predicate. In the first colon the predicate consists of two words and the object of one, whereas in the second colon the predicate consists of one word and the object of two. The objects make up a word-pair, as is evident from the Ugaritic parallel pair *qšt* // *mṭm*. The two finite verbs are both 2nd masculine singular *yiqtol* forms. Each colon contains the phonemes ‘ayin, resh, shin, and taw. Moreover, the bicolon begins and ends with a sonant inclusion, as the first and last words exhibit the vowel pattern /ā-ē/. In this poetic line Yahweh’s readying his bow for combat is aptly paralleled by his preparing arrows for battle by daubing their points with (serpent’s or dragon’s) poison as in *Anzu* II 63.

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<sup>(53)</sup> J.-M. DURAND, *Archives épistolaires de Mari* (Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations; ARM 26 I/2; Paris 1988) §483:25.

<sup>(54)</sup> W. HEIMPEL, *Letters to the King of Mari: A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (Mesopotamian Civilizations; Winona Lake, IN 2003) 385.

<sup>(55)</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 339.

## SUMMARY

Hab 3,9a has proven to be a troublesome text, most of the difficulties stemming from the second colon, especially the last word, אָמַר. The proposal argued here is that this reading results from a well attested scribal error. The original reading was אָמַר, the Hiphil 2nd masculine singular *yiqtol* form of the verb אָמַר, “to be bitter”. In this context it means “to make bitter”, specifically “to poison (weapons) with serpent’s gall”. The connection of this root with “(serpent’s) poison” is well documented in a number of Semitic languages, and poisoning projectiles to make them especially deadly is well known in the ancient world. The Akkadian cognate appears in the Mari texts with reference to poisoning weapons. Hab 3,9a portrays YHWH as withdrawing his bow and poisoning his arrows as part of his preparation for battle with the powers of chaos.

## Lexical Meaning in Biblical Hebrew and Cognitive Semantics: a Case Study

In a recent survey of Biblical Hebrew lexica<sup>(1)</sup>, it was pointed out that the theoretical frames of reference underlying both the older classics such as Brown-Driver-Briggs (=BDB)<sup>(2)</sup> and Koehler and Baumgartner (=KB)<sup>(3)</sup>, as well as the more recent Dictionary of Classical Hebrew (=DCH)<sup>(4)</sup>, can be called into question<sup>(5)</sup>. Two weaknesses were highlighted. Firstly, the layout and structure of these dictionaries reflect very little of the wealth of insights provided by theoretical lexicography (i.e. the theoretical reflection about the practice of dictionary making) and dictionary criticism in recent years<sup>(6)</sup>. Secondly, the semantic model(s) underlying available Biblical Hebrew dictionaries are either outdated (in the case of BDB and KB), or represent a very narrow and inadequate version of what modern linguistics has to offer for Biblical Hebrew lexicology (in the case of DCH). If one considers, even in very broad terms, recent developments in the field of semantics, in particular cognitive semantics, the shortcomings of bilingual Biblical Hebrew–English dictionaries that provide mere translation glosses (in the case of BDB and KB), or glosses supplemented with lists of the systematic syntagmatic distribution of lexical items (in the case of Clines) soon become evident. For example, if one accepts the insights about the ways in which humans across languages use linguistic terms to categorize their world, and the cultural embedment of languages' lexical stock, a new perspective emerges on the type of information that is indispensable in a bilingual dictionary of which the source and target languages are remote in time and space. However, although cognitive semantics provides promising new perspectives on the notion of "lexical meaning", it does not present — as any other linguistic theory does — a ready-made model that can merely be applied to an ancient language like Biblical Hebrew. Issues that are still debated, for example, are the exact role that syntactic and encyclopedic information should play in the analysis and interpretation of lexical items<sup>(7)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> C.H.J. VAN DER MERWE, "Towards a Principled Model for Biblical Hebrew Lexicology", *JSNL* 30/1 (2004) 119-137.

<sup>(2)</sup> F. BROWN – S.R. DRIVER – C.A. BRIGGS, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford 1909).

<sup>(3)</sup> L. KOEHLER – W. BAUMGARTNER – M.E.J. RICHARDSON – J.J. STAMM, *The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament* (Volumes 1–4 combined in one electronic edition) (Leiden – New York 2000).

<sup>(4)</sup> *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (ed. D.J.A. CLINES) (Sheffield 1993).

<sup>(5)</sup> This survey complemented a similar overview by M. O'CONNOR, "Semitic Lexicography: European Dictionaries of Biblical Hebrew in the Twentieth Century", *IOS* 20 (2002) 173-212.

<sup>(6)</sup> T.B. IMBAYARWO, "Existing Biblical Hebrew Dictionaries in the Light of Current Trends in Lexicography", Paper read at the Annual Congress of the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies (Bloemfontein 2003).

<sup>(7)</sup> Cf. C.H.J. VAN DER MERWE, *Biblical Hebrew Lexicology: A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective* (Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt 6) (in the press 2005).



The aim of this case study is to illustrate some of the insights that can be gained from using a cognitive semantic perspective to describe the meaning potential of a set of lexical items, viz. חזק/חזק, גבורה/גבר, אמן/אמן (8). It is obvious from the information provided in most available BH lexica (mainly “translation glosses”) that some of these terms can often, and others in particular instances, be translated either as “be(come) strong”, “strong”, “strength” or “power(ful)”. It is also clear from most of the lexica that these terms are not absolute synonyms. However, the lexica (as well as available theological dictionaries) do not help one to fully understand the relationship and/or differences between the lexical items.

The notion “meaning potential” occupies a central position in this paper since I hypothesize that it provides a justifiable theoretical frame of reference for capturing the types of information that should be included in bilingual BH lexica. I will focus in this paper on its contribution, alongside that of the notions “prototypical meaning” and “basic level category”, for better understanding the relationships between חזק/חזק, גבורה/גבר, אמן/אמן (9).

The paper is organized as follows: I start with a few general observations on a cognitive semantic approach to meaning. Secondly, I give a brief description of those insights of cognitive linguistics that have played a crucial role (at least consciously) in this investigation. Special reference is made to the concept “folk taxonomy” since it is crucial for understanding the notions “basic level category”, “prototypical meaning” and in particular “meaning potential”. Reasons are also given why the latter notion plays such a central role in this study. Thirdly, I explain why חזק/חזק and כח may be regarded as the “basic level” items for the conceptual category “strong/strength” in Biblical Hebrew. After describing the meaning potential of כח, I discuss the reasons why the other items in the list are not regarded as “basic level” items. I do not attempt to deal exhaustively with the meaning potential of any of these terms. However, with reference to the description of the meaning potential of כח, and drawing on those of the other items of our set (10), I focus on describing the relationship between חזק/חזק, גבורה/גבר, אמן/אמן. In conclusion I summarize the contribution that this application of a few basic concepts from cognitive semantics has made towards a better understanding of a set of related BH lexical items.

(8) In an initial survey I considered including עצם/עצם. However, on account of its relatively specialized connotation of strength that is associated with multiplicity, I decided to exclude it. As far as its distribution is concerned, the adjective עצם occurs 31x in the OT. In only 5 cases does it not act as an attribute of נר or נר. For an excellent description of lexical items with the root עצם, cf. G. LOHFINK, “עצם”, *TDOT*, XI, 289-303.

(9) Compare H. RECHENMACHER “Kognitive Linguistik und Althebräische Lexikographie”, *JNSL* 30/2 (2004) 43-59. He does not explicitly use the term “meaning potential”, but does illustrate the value of insights from cognitive linguistics for the better understanding of set of BH items, viz. אר, לבי, שחל, כפיר, נור.

(10) A description of the meaning potential of each of the other items can be obtained at the following website: <http://academic.sun.ac.za/as/dokumente/VanderMerwe/AddendumtoLexicalmeaningandcognitivelinguistics.pdf>

1. *Some Basic Assumptions of Cognitive Semantics and its Implications*<sup>(11)</sup>

Cognitive semantics represents an experimental approach to meaning. In some respects it links up with pre-structuralist and romantic approaches to linguistic meaning. It does not believe that the meaning of linguistic expressions can be determined merely by a structural analysis of linguistic signs (e.g. their syntagmatic and paradigmatic distribution) in abstraction from the society that uses them. It also does not regard language and linguistic knowledge as an autonomous human faculty, as is argued in Chomskyeian circles, nor that the lexicon of a language is one of a number of independent modules that make up this special human faculty. Instead, a basic assumption of cognitive semantics (which is backed by substantial empirical evidence) is that “the cognitive processes that govern language use, in particular the construction and communication of meaning by language, are in principle the same as other cognitive abilities”<sup>(12)</sup>. Furthermore, “common human experience of maturing and interacting in society motivates basic conceptual structures which make understanding and language possible”<sup>(13)</sup>.

The lexical stock (alongside the grammatical constructions) of a language is regarded as representing a set of conceptual categories that reflect the way in which a society conceptualizes itself and its environment. Geeraerts describes these categories as a “repository of world knowledge, a structured collection of meaningful categories that help us deal with new experiences and store information about old ones”<sup>(14)</sup>. However, this is not a full-scale return to a strong romantic position concerning the relationship between language and thought<sup>(15)</sup>.

Humans tend to categorize the entities of the world in which they live in terms of categories at various levels, e.g. animals>fish>freshwater fish>black bass>large-mouthed bass. Folk taxonomies tend to differ from biological taxonomies, because cultures differ concerning the attributes that they regard as the most salient in the classification process, e.g. a bat’s ability to fly may be more salient than its ability to give birth, so that it would often be classified as a bird rather than as a mammal<sup>(16)</sup>.

However, folk taxonomies also show similarities across cultures<sup>(17)</sup>: (1)

<sup>(11)</sup> Compare also VAN DER MERWE, *Biblical Hebrew Lexicology: A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective*.

<sup>(12)</sup> W. CROFT – D.A. CRUSE, *Cognitive Linguistics* (Cambridge 2004) 2. — This means, among other things, that psychological models of cognition and memory shed light on the way linguistic knowledge is organized, in particular how categorization takes place.

<sup>(13)</sup> J. I. SAEED, *Semantics* (Oxford 1997) 331.

<sup>(14)</sup> D. GEERAERTS, “Structuring of Word Meaning I: An Overview”, *Lexikologie. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Natur und Struktur von Wörtern und Wortschätzen*. (eds. D.A. CRUSE – F. HUNDSNURSCHER – M. JOB – P.R. LUTZEIER) (Berlin – New York 2002) 112-113.

<sup>(15)</sup> Cf. the findings of S.C. LEVINSON, *Space in Language and Cognition*. Explorations in Cognitive Diversity (Cambridge 2003)

<sup>(16)</sup> Cf. the way that animals and plants are classified by speakers of Biblical Hebrew. Cf. A.S. GILBERT, “The Native Fauna of the Ancient Near East”, *A History of the Ancient Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (ed. B.J. COLLINS) (Leiden 2002) 3-47.

<sup>(17)</sup> Pre-linguistic image schemes which reflect the way in which humans perceive and experience their bodies as containers also across languages motivate linguistic expressions, e.g. someone is filled with emotions (in English) or filled with a spirit (in Biblical Hebrew: Exod 35,31, Jer 31,25). See SAEED, *Semantics*, 311-312, for a succinct explanation of “path” and “force” image schemes.

cultures tend to have not more than five or six levels of categorization of biological domains; (2) the relationships tend to be complex, not always forming logically structured hierarchies; and (3) any folk taxonomy has a core, referred to as its basic level, e.g. in the case of animals it will be things like fish, dog, cat, bird, etc. Geeraerts observes as follows in this regard:

... basic level categories exhibit a number of ... characteristics. From a psychological point of view, they are conceptualized as perceptual and functional gestalts<sup>(18)</sup>. From a developmental point of view, they are early in acquisition, i.e. they are the first terms of the taxonomy learned by the child. From a linguistic point of view, they are named by short morphologically simple items. And from a conceptual point of view, it has been claimed that the basic level constitutes the level where prototype effects are most outspoken, in the sense that they maximize the number of attributes shared by members of the category, and minimize the number of attributes shared with members of other categories<sup>(19)</sup>.

Categories tend to have fuzzy borders<sup>(20)</sup>, e.g. they may include items that are regarded as good examples of a category and those that are less typical. In the case of the category fruit, apples and oranges would be regarded by American speakers of English as good examples of the category, while pomegranates, lemons, watermelons and pineapples will be regarded as not such good examples<sup>(21)</sup>. "Good examples" are regarded as prototypes of a particular category. Definitions of categories are as a rule made in terms of the attributes that apply to its prototypical members, e.g. fruit will be described as "the soft and sweet edible entities that grow on trees and bushes"<sup>(22)</sup>.

Practising lexicographers and lexicologists would be the first to agree that one of the most problematic aspects of describing lexical items is that of their sense relationships. Pertinent questions that often arise are: (1) how many senses should be distinguished? (The same question posed from a different perspective: How does one distinguish what are no longer polysemes, but homonyms?)<sup>(23)</sup> (2) How should the relationships between the different senses of the same lexical entity be interpreted? (3) Should one distinguish a "basic meaning"? What is the relationship between such a "basic meaning", an "original meaning", a "prototypical meaning", and the different senses of

<sup>(18)</sup> This means that people can form a mental representation of a fish, a dog, etc., but not of an animal.

<sup>(19)</sup> GEERAERTS, "An Overview", 312.

<sup>(20)</sup> Cf. CROFT – CRUSE, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 89.

<sup>(21)</sup> The notion of "Goodness-of-Example" is not uncontested. Cf. CROFT – CRUSE, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 76-81.

<sup>(22)</sup> D. Geeraerts refers to this type of definition of the sense of fruit as its "basic reading". For him it is "the center of semantic cohesion in the category; it holds the category together by making the other readings accessible. Three features, in short (psychological salience, relative frequency of use, interpretative advantageousness) may be mentioned as indications for the central position of a particular reading ("An overview", 306)". However, the prototype theory is not without shortcomings. Cf. CROFT – CRUSE, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 87-96.

<sup>(23)</sup> When one tries to describe the Biblical Hebrew item קֶרֶן the crux of this problem is evident.

a polyseme? Should only a basic reading be defined, or should each sense be defined? How inclusive should such a definition be? Should a minimum context be assumed, or should the meaning potential in any context be described?

In cognitive semantic circles it has been established that the relationships between polysemes tend to display similarities across cultures, e.g. “thought mapping” is based on similarity from the concrete to more abstract in the case of metaphorical extensions (the fruit of my work, the foot of the mountain), based on a relation of contiguity in the case of metonymy (he drank the whole bottle) as well as specialization (corn = maize (USA) / wheat (England) / oats (Scotland)) and generalization (fruit as the seed-bearing part of a plant) of the sense of a basic reading.

These insights make the definitions of the prototypical or basic reading of a lexical item attractive, since sense distinctions can then be made on the basis of the above-mentioned extensions. However, Allwood rightly points out some of the pitfalls of such an approach<sup>(24)</sup>. In my view the most problematic aspect of such an approach is that tracking the mappings, which can be complicated in the case of multiple mappings and extensions, does not necessarily shed light on the way a particular mapping has become conventionalized. Allwood suggests that “the basic unit of word meaning is the ‘meaning potential’ of the word”<sup>(25)</sup>. In other words, this is the unit that needs to be defined. “The meaning potential is all the information that a word has been used to convey either by a single individual or, on the social level, by the language community”<sup>(26)</sup>. The content of the meaning potential of a word does not distinguish between linguistic and encyclopaedic information. When a word is used, one or more aspect of its meaning potential are activated and the activation takes place “in a context which creates certain conditions for its activation, with these conditions determining the way in which the potential is activated. The result of an activation is normally a structured partial activation of the potential”<sup>(27)</sup>. An example in Biblical Hebrew is the generic word for saying, viz. אָמַר. In contexts where the content of saying is a question, its potential as a word of asking is activated<sup>(28)</sup>. The same can be said of דָּבַר. In a context of promising, that part of its meaning potential may be activated<sup>(29)</sup>. The process in which a “structured partial activation” of a

<sup>(24)</sup> J. ALLWOOD, “Meaning Potential and Context: Some Consequences for the Analysis of Variation in Meaning”, *Cognitive Approaches to Lexical Semantics* (H. CUYCKENS – R. DIRVEN – J.R. TAYLOR) (Berlin 2003) 39-41.

<sup>(25)</sup> ALLWOOD, *Meaning Potential and Context*, 43. — According to W. Cruse and D.A. Croft, “Each lexical item (word form) is associated with a body of conceptual content”. They refer to it as “purport”. Purport “is part of the raw material contributed by the word to processes of construal of an interpretation” (*Cognitive Linguistics*, 100).

<sup>(26)</sup> J. Allwood remarks: “Meaning potentials are thus a result of conventionalizations of semantic operations meeting contextual requirements” (*Meaning Potential and Context*, 50). For Croft and Cruse “purport is some function of previous experience of (construed) occurrences of the word in specific situations (*Cognitive Linguistics*, 101)”.

<sup>(27)</sup> ALLWOOD, *Meaning Potential and Context*, 43. — Cruse and Croft describe such an instance of activation (i.e. word meaning) as “a perspective of our knowledge of the world, as seen through the concept profiled by the word” (*Cognitive Linguistics*, 30).

<sup>(28)</sup> Cf. Gen 3,11; 33,5 and Exod 3,13.

<sup>(29)</sup> 1 Kgs 9,5; Jos 1,3; 14,10; 22,4. In contrast, cf. Deut 19,8.

meaning potential takes place is referred to by Croft and Cruse<sup>(30)</sup> as a “dynamic construal of meaning”.

For the purposes of this paper I now hypothesize that (a) an analysis and a systematic description of all the occurrences of the lexical items in our set in the Hebrew Bible will make the identification of the meaning potential of each item possible, (b) each lexical item will display a prototypical reading, (c) the notion “basic level category” will point to the most prototypical lexical items for the concepts “strong/strength” in BH and (d) the notion “basic level category” is pivotal for understanding the relationship between a set of semantically related lexical items.

## 2. *Lexical Items with the Label “Strong/Strength”*

I had compiled all the BH words that are normally translated into English — this is of course a solely heuristic procedure — as “strong, powerful, strength, mighty, etc”. I ended up with the following list, viz. אַמִּיץ/אָמִץ, עֹז/עָז, כַּח, חֵזֶק/חֹזֶק, נְבוֹרָה/נִבְרָה. The first question is, of course: does one use roots or word forms as point of departure? I opted for the first position, primarily as a heuristic procedure.

As a next step I used the theoretical frame of reference of De Blois<sup>(31)</sup>, and the electronic template Vocabula 3.3 to record, where relevant, the morphological features, the syntagmatic distribution, semantic features, near-synonyms and antonyms. Particular attention was paid to the recording of the contextual frame of each occurrence of the above-mentioned lexical items. On the basis of these data, I then described the meaning potential of each of the lexemes, paying special attention to (1) the major distinctions that warrant different definitions as far as their meaning potential is concerned, and (2) prototypical use(s) of each of these distinctions. This was, however, easier said than done.

After this semasiological analysis of a list of lexical items, the crucial question from an onomasiological point of view was: are there any specific word form(s) that can unequivocally be regarded as the basic level reading(s) of the category “strong/strength” in Biblical Hebrew? Since we have no mother-tongue speakers of Biblical Hebrew to consult, frequency of use and the widest possible combinational properties that may be an indication of its generic quality were used as criteria. I also considered the observation by Geerarts that basic level items tend to be named by “short morphologically simple terms<sup>(32)</sup>”. If the latter would be the point of departure, עֹז would be our first candidate and, depending on how one understands “short morphologically simple terms”, חֵזֶק may also be a candidate. However, on the basis of an interplay of all three criteria, I found חֵזֶק and the verbal forms and adjectives

<sup>(30)</sup> CROFT – CRUSE, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 97-98.

<sup>(31)</sup> R. DE BLOIS, *Towards a New Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew Based on Semantic Domains. Doctoral dissertation* (Amsterdam 2000); ID., “A Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew”, *Current Trends in Scripture Translation* (ed. P.A. Noss) (Reading 2002) 275-295; ID., “Lexicography and Cognitive Linguistics: Hebrew Metaphors from a Cognitive Perspective”, *unpublished article. United Bible Societies, Triannual Translation Workshop, Iguassu Falls* (Brazil 2003) 1-17.

<sup>(32)</sup> GEERAERTS, “An Overview”, 312.

with the root  $\text{חזק}$  to be the most basic level terms.  $\text{חזק}$  has by far the widest distribution. As a verb  $\text{חזק}$  occurs 370 times and as an adjective 58 times<sup>(33)</sup>. The two basic level terms  $\text{חזק}$  and  $\text{בָּחַ$  display similarities respectively with their English counterparts “strength” and “strong, to be strong, to strengthen”.

I will not further deal with  $\text{חזק}$  here. An example from Amos 2,14 will have to suffice. It reflects well the relationship between  $\text{בָּחַ$  and  $\text{חזק}$ , viz.  $\text{וַיִּחַזֶּק לְאַדְמִי בָחוּ}$ .

The meaning potential of  $\text{בָּחַ}$ , which occurs (only as a noun) 127 times in the Hebrew Bible, can be described as follows:

1a.  $\text{בָּחַ}$  is often an attribute of humans, God or animals (or parts of them, typically their hand(s), arm(s) and legs). Sometimes  $\text{בָּחַ}$  is an attribute of their voices<sup>(34)</sup> or emotions. It prototypically denotes the ability to perform actions, prevail in, or endure situations that require the exertion or mustering of an effort/force<sup>(35)</sup>, e.g. manual work<sup>(36)</sup>, fighting opposing forces<sup>(37)</sup>, ruling a kingdom<sup>(38)</sup>, oppressing other people<sup>(39)</sup>, acquiring wealth<sup>(40)</sup>, or giving birth<sup>(41)</sup>. It often refers to the ability/energy humans need to face the challenges or hardships of life<sup>(42)</sup>, express emotions (e.g. cry)<sup>(43)</sup> or the ability to do specialized work<sup>(44)</sup>.

Living entities may typically have various measures of this ability. Abundant measures of the ability are associated with young healthy beings<sup>(45)</sup>, soldiers<sup>(46)</sup>, large numbers of people<sup>(47)</sup>, big armies<sup>(48)</sup> big animals<sup>(49)</sup> and God. In the case of people it is an ability that may be absent<sup>(50)</sup>, drained<sup>(51)</sup> or used up<sup>(52)</sup>. God, however, has huge measures of this ability<sup>(53)</sup>. He can give the ability to humans<sup>(54)</sup> (and big animals)<sup>(55)</sup>, or take

<sup>(33)</sup> It is significant that the lexical item occurs frequently in Chronicles (98x, in other words, more or less 20% of all occurrences).

<sup>(34)</sup> Ps 29,4; Isa 40,9.

<sup>(35)</sup> Judg 16,6.9.15.17.19.

<sup>(36)</sup> Also Gen 31,6; Qoh 9,10; Neh 4,4 and Isa 44,12. Possibly also Job 30,2.

<sup>(37)</sup> Isa 10,13.

<sup>(38)</sup> 2 Chr 22,9 and Dan 11,6.

<sup>(39)</sup> Eccl 4,1.

<sup>(40)</sup> 1 Chr 29,2. Deut 8,17.18. Perhaps also Gen 49,3.

<sup>(41)</sup> 2 Kgs 19,3.

<sup>(42)</sup> 1 Sam 28,28.22; Job 3,17; Ps 31,11; 38,11; 71,9; 102,24; Prov 24,10; Isa 40,29.31; 41,1; 44,12; 49,4; Jer 48,45; Lam 1,6.14; Dan 10,8; 10,16 and 17. In Ezra 10,13 a specific task is involved, viz. standing in the rain for days. In Job 6,11 and 12 God is implied as the cause of the hardship.

<sup>(43)</sup> 1 Sam 30,4.

<sup>(44)</sup> 1 Chr 26,8 and Dan 1,4.

<sup>(45)</sup> Prov 20,29.

<sup>(46)</sup> Josh 14,11.

<sup>(47)</sup> Josh 17,17.

<sup>(48)</sup> Dan 11,25.

<sup>(49)</sup> Job 39,11; 39,21; Prov 14,4. In Dan 8,6 a feature of a big animal's rage is denoted.

<sup>(50)</sup> 2 Chr 14,10; 20,12, Dan 11,15. The construction used is  $\text{בָּחַ אֵין}$ . Cf. also Job 26,2 and Dan 8,7.

<sup>(51)</sup> 1 Sam 28,20.

<sup>(52)</sup> Ps 31,11; 71,9. Isa 40,29.

<sup>(53)</sup> Job 9,19; 36,22 and 37,23 and Isa 40,26.

<sup>(54)</sup> Ps 33,16 and Zech 4,6 (as a near-synonym of  $\text{חֲזָק}$ , as second item of the pair). Implied in Judg 6,14.

<sup>(55)</sup> In Job 40,16  $\text{בָּחַ}$  is a near-synonym of  $\text{אֵין}$ .

it away from them<sup>(56)</sup>. This attribute of God is associated with what “belongs” to Him<sup>(57)</sup> and sometimes with His great wisdom<sup>(58)</sup>. It makes Him dangerous to confront<sup>(59)</sup>, but also the one who can do great deeds in creation<sup>(60)</sup> and for His people<sup>(61)</sup>. This even includes His ability to forgive<sup>(62)</sup>.

Someone who has *כֹּחַ* is described as *חֹזֵק* <sup>(63)</sup>. *כֹּחַ*, however, is an ability that needs to be mustered [*עֹזֵר* <sup>(64)</sup> or *אֲמִיץ* <sup>(65)</sup>]. It appears to be unmarked in most contexts as far as the quantity that is involved is concerned. This is in contrast to *גְּבוּרָה*, which always implies a huge measure of “strength”. *כֹּחַ* can be modified as far as quantity is concerned<sup>(66)</sup>, e.g. *הָחֹזֵק וְיָד גְּדוֹלָה בְּכֹחַ* (“with great strength and a strong hand”) <sup>(67)</sup>, *כֹּחַ אֲמִיץ* <sup>(68)</sup> (“force of strength” = great power”), *כֹּחַ בָּרֵךְ* <sup>(69)</sup> (greatness/ abundance of strength”) or *עָצָם כֹּחוֹ* (“His strength will be extremely great”) <sup>(70)</sup>. In other contexts, it appears to be marked as far as quantity is concerned<sup>(71)</sup> and then is regarded as a near-synonym of *גְּבוּרָה* <sup>(72)</sup>. A relationship similar to that which is displayed in the hierarchy: “dog” and “dog – bitch” may be involved<sup>(73)</sup>.

1b. *כֹּחַ* refers to the accumulative effect of humans’ ability to perform actions that require effort<sup>(74)</sup>. It can be the resources or ability they have to give back to the Lord as a tithe<sup>(75)</sup>, the wealth they have acquired<sup>(76)</sup>, or the produce of the land they cultivate<sup>(77)</sup>.

If one now considers the other terms in our list, the follow picture emerges:

*עֹז* is a near-synonym of *כֹּחַ*, but is the only term in our list that never co-occurs with *כֹּחַ*. *עֹז* has a more specialized distribution than *כֹּחַ*. In 76% of the cases of its use, it denotes an attribute of God to do powerful deeds in order to provide a safe refuge for His people. The cultural model “God is a safe

<sup>(56)</sup> 1 Chr 29,12 and Ps 102,24. Cf. also Judg 16,6.9.15.17.19.

<sup>(57)</sup> E.g. His messengers (Ps 103,20). When He or His messenger gives food to someone, it appears to give them extraordinary abilities. Cf. 1 Kgs 19,8.

<sup>(58)</sup> Jer 32,17. Cf. also Job 26,2.

<sup>(59)</sup> Job 9,19; 36,22.

<sup>(60)</sup> Ps 65,7; 111,6; 147,5; Isa 50,2; Jer 10,12; 27,5; 32,17; 51,15.

<sup>(61)</sup> Exod 15,6; 1 Chr 29,12; 2 Chr 20,6; 25,8; Job 24,22; 26,12; Isa 50,2; 63,1; Mic 3,8; Nah 1,3. Probably implied in 1 Sam 2,9. Cf. 1 Sam 2,10. Also Exod 9,16; 32,11, Num 14,13.17; Deut 4,37; 9,29; 2 Kgs 17,36; Neh 1,10.

<sup>(62)</sup> Num 14,17.

<sup>(63)</sup> Josh 14,11 and Amos 2,14.

<sup>(64)</sup> 1 Chr 29,14; 2 Chr 2,5; 13,20; 22,9 and Dan 11,6.

<sup>(65)</sup> Amos 2,14; Nah 2,2; Prov 24,5. Cf. also Dan 11,25 where *כֹּחַ* is “stirred up”.

<sup>(66)</sup> In 2 Chr 26,13 *כֹּחַ* is modified by *חֵיל*.

<sup>(67)</sup> Cf. also Josh 17,17; Judg 16,6; Jer 27,5; 32,17; Nah 1,3.

<sup>(68)</sup> Cf. Job 9,4; Isa 40,26. Cf. also Job 36,19 and Prov 24,5.

<sup>(69)</sup> Ps 33,16; Isa 63,1.

<sup>(70)</sup> Dan 8,24.

<sup>(71)</sup> Exod 15,6; 1 Sam 2,9; Job 26,12; Hab 1,11; Dan 8,22.

<sup>(72)</sup> 1 Chr 29,12; 2 Chr 20,6; Mic 3,8.

<sup>(73)</sup> Dog as a rule is unmarked for gender (e.g. She prefers to have a dog rather than a cat.). However, when dog used as the opposite of bitch, it is marked for masculine gender (e.g. We have two brown labradors, a dog and a bitch).

<sup>(74)</sup> Cases with this sense are near-synonyms of a similar sense that *חֵיל* may have.

<sup>(75)</sup> Ezr 2,69.

<sup>(76)</sup> Job 6,22 and Prov 5,10.

<sup>(77)</sup> Gen 4,12; Hos 7,9; Job 31,39.



refuge” appears often to be present. Jer 16,19 testifies explicitly in this regard יְהוָה עָזִי וּמְנוּסִי בְיוֹם עָרָה. Like כֹּחַ it is an ability that sometimes needs to be mustered or invoked. In Ps 93,1 it is said that God “clothed” himself with עָז, while in Isa 51,9 he is asked to clothe Himself with עָז. When עָז is used to describe an attribute of humans or animals, it refers to specially endowed humans (trained warriors, kings, and Lady Wisdom) or big animals.

In contrast עָז, which is evenly distributed through the entire Hebrew Bible, is never an attribute of God, but an attribute of people (a nation, king, an enemy), big animals and natural forces. A frame of aggression, fierceness or destructiveness is nearly always present. It is significant that the verbal root עָז tends to share the distribution and meaning potential of עָז and not עָז.

A feature of the pair גְּבוּרָה/גִּבּוֹר, which it shares with כֹּחַ and חֹזֶק, is that the pair is relatively evenly distributed in the Hebrew Bible. Unlike גְּבוּרָה, כֹּחַ is never modified and prototypically describes the ability to perform actions that require a huge measure of force or an extreme effort — more or less in the same way as the English expression “very powerful”. In other words, unlike כֹּחַ, it is always marked for a huge measure. A significant feature of גְּבוּרָה as a near-synonym of כֹּחַ<sup>(78)</sup> or עָז<sup>(79)</sup> is that in all the cases that they are used in the same context (mainly in semantic parallelisms) גְּבוּרָה is mentioned second. I regard this feature of גְּבוּרָה as a confirmation of my hypothesis that it is the more specialized or marked item of כֹּחַ or עָז<sup>(80)</sup>.

The pair אִמּוּץ/אִמּוּץ is also evenly distributed throughout the Hebrew Bible. It often co-occurs with חֹזֶק. It is significant that it is always the second member of the pair, which may suggest that אִמּוּץ/אִמּוּץ are the more specialized terms. This possibility is underlined by the fact that אִמּוּץ/אִמּוּץ has a more focused distribution than חֹזֶק in the sense that it occurs primarily in contextual frames of conflict.

חֵיל is a frequently occurring item (245×), but it has a more specialized connotation than כֹּחַ and חֹזֶק. If one leaves out of consideration the substantial number of cases that it refers to (1) a specialized skill<sup>(81)</sup>, (2) (in a few cases) the ability to act with courage in a morally and ethically correct way, i.e. a “worthy” person, (3) the objects that people possess and that are greatly valued, “wealth” or an attribute of people who possess these objects, the following is clear: it is predominantly an attribute of able-bodied men, in particular soldiers. It refers to their ability to fight well, in other words, they are skilled warriors, and this ability often accompanies a degree of inner strength, i.e. bravery. חֵיל also often refers to people who provide (political) strength, a large group of people, often armed for fighting. In a few cases no contextual frame of warfare is directly involved. This lexical item is seldom

<sup>(78)</sup> Ps 65,7; 1 Chr 29,12; 2 Chr 20,6; Job 26,12; Mic 3,8.

<sup>(79)</sup> Ps 21,14.

<sup>(80)</sup> Van Steenberghe provides convincing arguments and evidence in support of such an interpretation of near-synonyms in semantic parallelisms. [G.J. VAN STEENBERGHE, “Semantics, World View and Bible Translation: An integrated analysis of a selection of Hebrew lexical items referring to negative moral behaviour in the book of Isaiah” (unpublished doctoral dissertation at the University of Stellenbosch) (Stellenbosch 2002)].

<sup>(81)</sup> 1 Chr 26,8 reads אִשְׁתֵּי חֵיל בְּכֶם לְעִבְרָה.

used to denote an attribute of God. When this does happen, it provides a frame of God as warrior or One who enables His people to face hostile forces.

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The notion “semantic potential” was used in this study to capture the activation potential for all the information (linguistic and encyclopaedic) connected with each of a set of semantically related lexical items in the Hebrew Bible, viz. עוז/עו, כח, חיל, חזקה/חזק, גבורה/גבר, אומץ/אמץ. Commencing with the “basic level items” of the set, describing the distribution, the prototypical use and accompanying contextual frames of each term, the following picture emerged:

כח and חזקה/חזק are the basic level terms for the conceptual category “strong/strength” in Biblical Hebrew.

The prototypical reading of כח appears to be: כח denotes the ability — typically unmarked for quantity — which living beings may have various quantities of, and which they need to muster, to perform actions, prevail in, or endure situations that require the exertion or mustering of an effort/force.

The term עו does not co-occur with כח. It occurs primarily in poetic sections and very often denotes an attribute of God, viz. to do powerful deeds in order to care for His people. It also often invokes the contextual frame: “God is a safe refuge”.

The term עו nearly always has the connotation of fierceness and/or destructiveness. It never denotes an attribute of God.

גבר/גבורה is always marked for an abundant measure of strength, viz. “(very) powerful”.

חיל has various senses. The connotation with strength is mainly that of the ability of able-bodied men to fight well (with skill) and often accompanies a degree of inner strength, i.e. bravery.

אומץ/אמץ often co-occurs with חזק and appear to be the more specialized of the two. It occurs predominantly in contextual frames of conflict.

This is certainly not the last word on the meaning of the above-mentioned set of lexical items. I have not paid any systematic attention to the distribution of the lexical items in the diachronic layers of BH, nor to the contribution that comparative philological evidence can make towards a better understanding of any of these lexical items. More insights into the way(s) the speakers of BH conceptualized their world in general may also contribute to a refinement of the above-mentioned results. Questions that arose in the course of this investigation, and which I have not addressed are: Can a lexical item have more than one prototypical reading (e.g. כח in 1a and 1b above), do prototypical readings always correlate with frequency of use, and what status should be assigned to a “prototypical” reading in a particular corpus (e.g. the books of Chronicles)?

## SUMMARY

This paper examines the contribution that a cognitive linguistic model of meaning can make towards the semantic analysis and description of Biblical Hebrew. It commences with a brief description of some of the basic insights provided by cognitive semantics. The notion “semantic potential” is used to capture the activation potential for all the information (linguistic and encyclopaedic) connected with each of a set of semantically related lexical items in the Hebrew Bible, viz. עזו/עז, כח, חיל, חזק/חזק, גבורה/גבר, אמיץ/אמיץ. Commencing with the “basic level items” of the set, describing the distribution, the prototypical use and accompanying contextual frames of each term, the prototypical reading of and relationship between these terms are then identified.

## Ps 2,12: “Küsst den Sohn!”?

Die weithin als wörtlich angesehene Wiedergabe von נִשְׁקֶהֱבֵר mit “Küsst den Sohn!” ist weder notwendigerweise wörtlich, noch gibt sie — wie die meisten zugeben werden — im Zusammenhang des Psalms einen Sinn.

Die hebräischen Lexika<sup>(1)</sup> haben nun unter נִשְׁק zwei Eintragungen: 1. “küssen”, 2. “sich rüsten, sich wappnen” oder ähnlich. Mit dieser zweiten Bedeutung haben es seinerzeit bereits M. Buber und F. Rosenzweig<sup>(2)</sup> versucht: “Rüstet euch mit Läuterung”, was allerdings auch nicht befriedigt.

W. Gesenius und E. Kautzsch behandeln in ihrer *Grammatik*, § 52h, ein sprachliches Phänomen, das sie privatives<sup>(3)</sup> Piel nennen und führen dafür bereits mehr als ein halbes Dutzend Beispiele an<sup>(4)</sup>. Das Bekannteste: חָפַא – “sündigen” bekommt im Piel, etwa in Ps 51,9 und öfter, die Bedeutung “entsündigen”. Auf unseren Text angewandt führt eine solche sprachliche Möglichkeit zu der Übersetzung von נִשְׁק Piel: “abrüsten, die Waffen niederlegen”, was dem Zusammenhang — man vergleiche die Verse 1 bis 3 und 10 bis 12 — gut entspricht.

Bleibt noch das kleine Wort בֵּר. Auch hier haben Buber–Rosenzweig mit ihrer Übersetzung “Rüstet euch *mit Läuterung*” bereits den Weg gewiesen. בֵּר hat — so mein Vorschlag — die im Hebräischen ganz geläufige Bedeutung: “lauter, rein”, hier etwa “ehrlich”; ein Stichwort, das bis heute beim Thema “Abrüstung” von Bedeutung ist. בֵּר wäre dann hier adverbial gebraucht<sup>(5)</sup>.

נִשְׁקֶהֱבֵר kann also “wörtlich” meinen: “Rüstet ehrlich ab!” Zumindest ist das eine zu erwägende Alternative. Erstaunlich, dass sie bisher — soweit ich sehen kann — noch nicht bedacht worden ist. Dass die Lösung einer so alten *crux interpretum* — die den überlieferten Text in keiner Weise verändern muss — möglicherweise so einfach ist, sollte nicht gegen ihre Richtigkeit sprechen. Doch, wie immer bei einer neuen Übersetzung: sie ist gewöhnungsbedürftig.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Vgl. W. GESENIUS, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (Leipzig 1921) 527b, 528a; BDB, 676; HALAT, 690. — Ein Blick auf das ugaritische *ntq* zeigt, dass es sich hier wahrscheinlich um zwei ursprünglich verschiedene Wortstämme handelt; vgl. J. AISTLEITNER, *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache* (Berlin 1965) Nr. 1876; C.H. GORDON, *Ugaritic Textbook* (AnOr 38; Roma 1965) Nr. 1721; G. DEL OLMO LETE – J. SANMARTIN, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* (Leiden – Boston 2004) 654.

<sup>(2)</sup> Die Schrift verdeutscht von M. Buber gemeinsam mit F. Rosenzweig: *Das Buch der Preisungen* (Köln – Olten 1962) 10; dieselbe Übersetzung schon bei L. Zunz (1794–1866) *Die Psalmen* [Tel-Aviv 1971] 3).

<sup>(3)</sup> Privativ meint das inhaltliche Entfernen oder Wegnehmen dessen, was im Grundwort ausgesprochen ist.

<sup>(4)</sup> M. DAHOOD, *Psalms III* (AB 17A) 390, hat einige weitere hinzugefügt.

<sup>(5)</sup> Vgl. Hieronymus, *iuxta Hebraeos* : „adore pure” (BHK); dieser Hinweis fehlt leider in BHS.

## SUMMARY

The long-standing difficulty in Ps 2,12 נִשְׁקוּ-בֵר is tentatively resolved by deriving נִשְׁקוּ from נִשֵּׁק II – “to be armed”, and interpreting the verbal form according to *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, § 52h, as ‘privative Piel’: “to be/get disarmed”, whereas בֵּר takes its normal meaning “pure, sincere”.

## RES BIBLIOGRAPHICAE

### Le Pentateuque à l'heure de ses usagers

A.F. Campbell et M.A. O'Brien sont bien connus pour avoir publié ces dernières années deux ouvrages remarquables: *Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions, Annotations* (Minneapolis, MN 1993) et *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History: Origins, Upgrades, Present Text* (Minneapolis, MN 2000). Sur ces deux ouvrages, voir entre autres *Bib* 77 (1996) 245-265 et *Bib* 83 (2002) 111-115. Le premier s'est révélé très utile parce qu'il exposait de façon didactique l'hypothèse documentaire telle que M. Noth l'avait reprise dans un de ses ouvrages classiques, *DieÜberlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart 1948; Darmstadt 1960). Le second a rendu bien des services et continue à le faire, même s'il était plus problématique et plus hypothétique. L'histoire deutéronomiste est en effet un terrain miné, sans doute encore davantage que le Pentateuque. Les mêmes auteurs publient à présent un troisième ouvrage qui propose une nouvelle hypothèse à propos de la composition du Pentateuque<sup>(1)</sup>, hypothèse qui se nourrit de quelques intuitions précédentes, développées entre autres dans deux articles de A.F. Campbell: "The Reported Story: Midway Between Oral Performance and Literary Art", *Semeia* 46 (1989) 77-85; "The Storyteller's Role: Reported Story and Biblical Text", *CBQ* 64 (2002) 427-441.

Les présupposés de cette nouvelle tentative sont au nombre de trois (5-6): (1) Les textes ont été écrits non pour des lecteurs, mais pour des utilisateurs. En ce sens, les doublets et variantes ne sont pas à reconduire à des "sources" indépendantes et continues, mais ils sont à comprendre comme une panoplie de possibilités offertes aux utilisateurs des anciennes traditions d'Israël, entre autres aux "conteurs" (*storytellers*), qui disposaient donc d'une sorte de répertoire dans lequel ils pouvaient puiser selon les circonstances et les besoins du moment. La pluralité et la multiplicité sont donc intentionnelles. (2) Il n'y a pas de récit sacerdotal (P); les caractéristiques de vocabulaire sont attribuables aux sujets traités et non à la présence d'une source sacerdotale. (3) Le changement dans l'usage des noms divins (*yhwh* et *'elohîm*) peut être expliqué autrement par le recours à l'hypothèse documentaire.

L'ouvrage est structuré selon une logique qui déroutera sans doute certains lecteurs. Après une brève introduction (chap. 1), le second chapitre (*Evidence*; 11-24) offre une démonstration de la thèse proposée. Tout d'abord, les auteurs affirment qu'il n'y a pas de récit sacerdotal en Gn 1-11 en montrant la faiblesse des trois principaux critères d'identification de cette source, les noms divins, l'intérêt pour les généalogies et l'intérêt pour

<sup>(1)</sup> A.F. CAMPBELL – M.A. O'BRIEN, *Rethinking the Pentateuch*. Prolegomena to the Theology of Ancient Israel (Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox Press, 2005). xvi-183 p. 15 × 23. \$29.95.

les dates. En réalité, les auteurs reprennent à nouveau frais la lecture critique du Pentateuque à partir de Gn 1, ce qu'avaient fait Witter (1711) ou Astruc (1753), puis bien d'autres après eux. Pour nos auteurs, les rédacteurs ont pu utiliser les noms divins pour "signer" leurs interventions; certains cercles ont pu montrer une préférence pour l'un ou l'autre des appellatifs divins; enfin, il faut remarquer que *'elohîm* est un nom commun tandis que *yhwh* est un nom propre, chose bien connue par ailleurs de l'exégèse rabbinique, reprise entre autres par U. Cassuto<sup>(2)</sup> et développée plus récemment par E. Blum<sup>(3)</sup>. De plus, l'intérêt pour les généalogies et pour les dates n'est pas une caractéristique exclusive du récit sacerdotal traditionnel. Le récit sacerdotal, pour nos auteurs, est composite: il y a *des* récits de coloration sacerdotale, non *un* récit sacerdotal.

Ensuite, les auteurs exposent leur "*Text-as-Base-for-User*" Approach. Deux observations fournissent la base du raisonnement: (1) l'extrême concision de nombreux récits bibliques et (2) la présence de différentes versions d'un même épisode. En quelques mots, les auteurs affirment que les textes ont été mis par écrit moins pour être lus que pour être utilisés comme canevas à compléter, développer et enrichir selon les circonstances et en vue de l'instruction, de l'enseignement ou même du divertissement: "Users normally read canonical texts as end-text, to be *expounded*. Users in ancient days, in contrast, may have used the precanonical text as a base-text, to be *expanded*" (17; italiques dans l'original; cf. 9, 19). La théorie, toutefois, s'applique uniquement aux récits du Pentateuque, ce qui veut dire environ 45% du total (18). Restent en-dehors de la recherche les textes législatifs et les textes poétiques. Nous reviendrons sur ce problème. Les auteurs ajoutent, et en insistant sur ce point, que leur proposition ne cherche pas à remplacer d'autres hypothèses, mais qu'elle entend plutôt les compléter (5: "We seek responsibly to propose one possibility, but not to exclude others").

Les implications de la théorie sont assez évidentes: s'il n'existe pas de récit sacerdotal, il n'existe pas de Yahwiste et, bien entendu, l'Élohiste s'évanouit lui aussi. En un mot, il faut dire au revoir à l'hypothèse documentaire dans son ensemble. Par ailleurs, nos auteurs affirment que les rédacteurs sont intelligents et qu'il faut à tout prix se défaire de l'image des éditeurs ou rédacteurs ineptes (23)<sup>(4)</sup>.

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<sup>(2)</sup> U. CASSUTO, *La questione della Genesi* (Firenze 1934) 1-92; ID., *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem 1961) 15-26; 27-41, surtout 31. Ce dernier livre reprend une série d'articles publiés précédemment en hébreu en 1941.

<sup>(3)</sup> E. BLUM, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (BWANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984) 471-476; l'étude est jugée négativement par nos auteurs, *Rethinking the Pentateuch*, 13, n. 1, un peu rapidement à notre avis. Pour un traitement classique de la question dans le cadre de l'hypothèse documentaire, voir J. SKINNER, *The Divine Names in Genesis* (London - New York 1914).

<sup>(4)</sup> J. Van Seters va plus loin encore et s'élève contre l'existence même des «éditeurs» et des «rédacteurs»; voir son prochain ouvrage J. VAN SETERS, *The Edited Bible. The Curious History of the "Editor" in Biblical Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI 2006), ouvrage préparé par deux articles précédents: J. VAN SETERS, "The Redactor in Biblical Studies: A Nineteenth Century Anachronism", *JNSL* 29 (2003) 1-19; ID., "An Ironic Circle: Wellhausen and the Rise of Redaction Criticism", *ZAW* 115 (2003) 487-500.



Il est évident que ces remarques recueillent le fruit de nombreuses recherches récentes et les poussent à leurs dernières conséquences. Depuis H. Gunkel, l'attention des exégètes s'est concentrée sur les "petites unités" <sup>(5)</sup>. Cette vue a été reprise ou confirmée de divers côtés, et non seulement par les travaux de R. Rendtorff <sup>(6)</sup>. J. Tigay a montré que l'épopée de Gilgamesh a existé d'abord sous forme de brefs récits isolés et combinés ensuite en un récit unifié <sup>(7)</sup>. Les récits transmis par la tradition orale et les épopées homériques ont connu une évolution semblable comme l'avaient montré les travaux de M. Parry et A.B. Lord, repris dans l'ouvrage désormais classique de A.B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA 1964) et corroborés par plusieurs travaux plus récents. Nos auteurs poussent cette intuition jusqu'au bout et l'on assiste à une fragmentation qui a de fortes analogies avec les propositions de l'école scandinave, en particulier de J. Pedersen (Copenhague) <sup>(8)</sup> et I. Engnell (Uppsala) <sup>(9)</sup> qui refusaient de voir dans le Pentateuque une série de documents complets et composés à des époques successives, mais y voient plutôt le reflet de divers courants de traditions qui avaient existé simultanément: "Because only from the starting point of an originally oral transmission is there an explanation of, for example, the variants within the Mosaic books, whose occurrences in this kind of literature is a typical feature of precisely an oral transmission, which works among other things according to something which can be called 'the epic law of iteration' — even though this is also true in some measure of 'written' literature, of a cult-dramatic kind" <sup>(10)</sup>. Plus

<sup>(5)</sup> Cf. l'expression désormais classique de H. Gunkel: "Die Genesis ist eine Sammlung von Sagen" (*Genesis* [Göttingen 1910] vii). Th. Römer a trouvé une expression heureuse lorsqu'il dit que le Yahviste de Gunkel est un "frère Grimm de la Genèse". Voir Th. RÖMER, "The Form-Critical Problem of the So-Called Deuteronomistic History"; *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (éd. M.A. SWEENEY – E. BEN ZVI) (Grand Rapids, MI 2003) 240-252 (241); cité par CAMPBELL – O'BRIEN, *Rethinking the Pentateuch*, 20. Mais déjà Wellhausen avait reconnu que l'organisation des récits patriarcaux était d'origine secondaire. Au point de départ existaient uniquement des récits isolés qui furent ensuite assemblés en fonction de la généalogie. Voir J. WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin 1878 = de Gruyter Studienbuch; Berlin – New York 2001) 324-325: "[Die] Erzählungen [des Jehovisten] sind jede für sich und einzeln zu verstehen; die Genealogie dient nur dazu sie aufzureihen, ihr Interesse und ihre Bedeutung bekommen sie keineswegs erst aus dem Zusammenhang". Pour les récits des origines, voir 294: "Aus dem Volksmunde stammen bloß die losen und ganz ungefähr auf einander bezogenen Erzählungen; ihre Verbindung zu einer festen Einheit ist das Werk dichterischer oder schriftstellerischer Formung".

<sup>(6)</sup> R. RENDTORFF, "Der «Jahvist» als Theologe? Zum Dilemma der Pentateuchkritik", *Congress Volume. Edinburgh 1974* (VTS 28; Leiden 1975) 158-166 = "The 'Yahvist' as Theologian? The Dilemma of Pentateuchal Criticism", *JSOT* 3 (1977) 2-9; ID., *Das Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (BZAW 147; Berlin – New York 1976).

<sup>(7)</sup> J. TIGAY, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia, PA 1982).

<sup>(8)</sup> J. PEDERSEN, "Passahfest und Passahlegende", *ZAW* 52 (1934) 161-175; ID., *Israel. Its Life and Culture* (Copenhagen 1940).

<sup>(9)</sup> I. ENGNELL, *Gamla Testamentet*. En traditionshistorisk inledning (Stockholm 1945); ID., "Methodological Aspects of Old Testament Study", *Congress Volume Oxford 1959* (VTS 7; Leiden 1960) 13-30; ID., "The Pentateuch", *A Rigid Scrutiny* (Nashville, TN 1969) = *Critical Essays on the Old Testament* (London 1970).

<sup>(10)</sup> C.R. NORTH, "Pentateuchal Criticism", *Old Testament and Modern Study* (ed. H.H. ROWLEY) (Oxford 1951) 48-83, 65, à propos de Engnell. Sur l'école scandinave, voir E. NIELSEN, *Oral Tradition* (London 1954); ID., "The Tradition-Historical Study of the

récemment, le lecteur se souviendra du titre de l'ouvrage de D.M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis* <sup>(11)</sup>. On serait tenté de dire avec Qohélet: *Nihil novi sub sole*. Il y a toutefois une différence essentielle entre l'ouvrage que nous discutons et les anciennes thèses de l'école scandinave ou les études plus récentes sur le sujet. Pour nos auteurs, en effet, la raison de la diversité n'est pas à chercher en arrière, dans le passé des textes, mais bien en avant, dans leur finalité.

Par ailleurs, après les attaques menées contre l'Élohiste par Volz et Rudolph dès 1933 et 1938 <sup>(12)</sup> et les attaques lancées contre le Yahviste sous la conduite de Rendtorff, il ne faut pas s'étonner que le récit sacerdotal subisse un sort analogue. Déjà P. Volz avait nié l'existence d'une "source" sacerdotale (1933).

Le troisième chapitre (*Outcome*; 25-101) offre une lecture suivie du Pentateuque selon les principes énoncés plus haut. La part du lion revient à Gn 1 – Ex 24 (25-87). Le reste est traité rapidement, comme par exemple Ex 25–40 (87-88), le Lévitique (89), le livre des Nombres (89-97) et le Deutéronome (97-99).

Pour ne donner qu'un exemple des nouvelles propositions, nos auteurs distinguent dans le cycle d'Abraham une tradition sur la famille d'Abraham (Gn 12,1-8; 13,18; 16,1-16; 18,1.3.9-1; 21,1-7.8-21), une histoire sur Abraham et Lot (13,2-17; 14,1-24; 18,2.4-8; 18,16–19,38), une tradition sur le seul Abraham (Gn 12,10-20; 15,1-21; 20,1-18; 21,22-34; 22,1-19), une tradition *El-Shaddai* (17,1-27; 21,1-5 (?); 23,1-20; 25,7-11.12-18), une tradition sur Rebecca (24,1-67) et un *tradition pool* (11,10-32; 22,20-24; 25,1-6) avec quelques textes qui fonctionnent comme charnières ou sutures (12,9; 13,1.3-4; 21,22-34). Les spécialistes y retrouveront des collections familières, comme la tradition sur Abraham et Lot, identifiée entre autres par Gunkel, et la tradition *El-Shaddai* qui est presque identique au récit sacerdotal traditionnel dans le cycle d'Abraham. D'autres classifications sont nouvelles, comme les traditions sur le seul Abraham où se côtoient des textes très disparates et très différents par le style et le contenu, comme par exemple 15,1-21 et 22,1-19. On notera que 21,22-34 est classifié comme texte appartenant à la tradition d'Abraham et comme "suture".

Parmi les innombrables propositions de nos auteurs, notons entre autres qu'ils considèrent Gn 27 comme un texte tardif et ce après une analyse du vocabulaire dont vaudra la peine de tenir compte à l'avenir (58-59).

Dans le livre de l'Exode, nos auteurs distinguent un "récit de l'exode" et un "récit du sanctuaire". Le premier ne va pas au-delà d'Ex 15 et le second se prolonge jusqu'à Ex 40. Cette proposition correspond en bonne partie à la distinction entre récit non sacerdotal et récit sacerdotal. La péricope du Sinaï

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Pentateuch since 1945, with Special Emphasis on Scandinavia", *The Production of Time. Tradition History in Old Testament Scholarship* (eds. K. JEPPESEN – B. OTZEN) (Sheffield 1984) 11-28.

<sup>(11)</sup> D.M. CARR, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*. Historical and Literary Approaches (Louisville, KY 1996). Cet ouvrage est peu utilisé par nos auteurs qui le citent une seule fois (64). Carr, toutefois, ne renonce pas à l'écrit sacerdotal.

<sup>(12)</sup> P. VOLZ – W. RUDOLPH, *Der Elohist als Erzähler*. Ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik (BZAW 63; Gießen 1933); W. RUDOLPH, *Der »Elohist« von Exodus bis Josua* (BZAW 68; Berlin 1938).

(Ex 19–24) reste problématique, mais elle forme une unité à part (83-87). Les deux ceremonies d'Ex 24,1-11, la liturgie d'alliance (24,3-8) et le repas sur la montagne (24,1-2.9-11) sont des unités distinctes, mais à lire ensemble: "Verses 10-11 celebrate what is made explicit in the covenantal ceremony of vv. 3-8; it is the task of storyteller or user to come to terms with this" (85). L'ensemble du chapitre offre une lecture critique du Pentateuque dans la ligne de ce qu'avaient fait il y a plus de deux siècles Astruc (1755), Eichhorn (1780-1783) ou Ilgen (1798)<sup>(13)</sup>, en relevant les discordances, affinités et correspondances.

Dans les appendices, les auteurs offrent deux études particulières, l'une sur Gn 1 et l'autre sur les textes traditionnellement attribués au récit sacerdotal en Gn 1-11 (*Appendix 1*); deux exemples (Gn 12-13 et 18-19) (*Appendix 2*); deux exceptions, c'est-à-dire deux textes qui ont amalgamés deux versions d'un même épisode (Gn 6-9 et Ex 14) (*Appendix 3*); un résumé des analyses des textes (Gn – Ex; Nm 1-24) (*Appendix 4*). L'ouvrage se termine par une bibliographie et trois index (citations bibliques, auteurs, sujets traités).

Il est impossible de discuter tous les détails de cette nouvelle proposition, tout à la fois intéressante et provocante. Trois points, à notre avis, méritent une attention particulière. Tout d'abord, c'est la théorie elle-même qui suscitera quelques hésitations. Les auteurs disent bien qu'elle se superpose à d'autres et qu'elle ne compte pas les remplacer, mais ils l'appliquent néanmoins à une bonne partie du Pentateuque.

À notre avis une telle théorie a certainement sa place parmi toutes celles qui voient le jour, mais elle a comme toutes les autres ses mérites et ses faiblesses. Parmi ses mérites, il faut citer son attention particulière à l'utilisation des textes, ce qui est une façon de revoir les théories sur la formation du Pentateuque non pas en fonction des théories "pragmatiques". Ces théories posent avant tout la question de savoir "pour qui" et "pour quoi" les textes sont écrits. En outre, bien des observations de détails sont judicieuses. Notons en particulier les analyses de vocabulaire, les réflexions théologiques et les observations faites sur le texte lui-même. Par exemple, les auteurs insistent — avec des bonnes raisons — sur le fait que les récits ne cherchent pas à informer sur le passé, mais à expliquer le présent: "The second paradigm shift, emerging during the course of the book, from Israel remembering its past to Israel pondering its present, also has wide implications, favoring a concern with theology (pondering) over history (remembering) [...]" (103; cf. 9, 105)<sup>(14)</sup>. Les pages sur l'histoire de Joseph

<sup>(13)</sup> Ilgen, par exemple, avait détecté dans le livre de la Genèse la présence de dix-sept documents regroupés en trois sources, le Jéhoviste et deux Élohistes. Voir K.D. ILGEN, *Die Urkunden des ersten Buchs von Moses in ihrer Urgestalt...* (Halle 1798) 393-394 (présence de deux Élohistes dans l'histoire de Joseph); 409-424 (nécessité d'une division en sources dans le livre de la Genèse); 426-433 (trois sources regroupant dix-sept documents; E<sup>1</sup> compte dix documents, E<sup>2</sup> en compte cinq et J seulement deux); 494 (liste des dix-sept documents).

<sup>(14)</sup> Le même principe vaut pour les historiens grecs selon A. MOMIGLIANO, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Sather Classical Lectures 54; Berkeley – Los Angeles – Oxford 1990) 18: "The Greek historian almost invariably thinks that the past events he tells have some relevance for the future. The events would not be important if they did not teach something to those who read about them. The story will provide an

sont particulièrement réussies (60-68). Les sections consacrées à la seconde partie de l'Exode et au reste du Pentateuque (Lv – Nb – Dt) sont forcément plus brèves et sans doute moins instructives. Enfin, la proposition de voir dans le Dt le pendant de Gn 1 est certes suggestive, mais sans plus. Le premier chapitre de la Genèse décrirait un monde idéal et le Dt un Israël idéal, celui qui est «rêvé» par la réforme de Josias (97-99; cf. 8 et 24). Les textes fournissent toutefois peu d'éléments pour étayer cette idée qui reste donc davantage de l'ordre des nombreuses lectures possibles.

Il faut ajouter que la théorie ne peut cacher certaines faiblesses. La toute première sautera aux yeux de tous les vieux baroudeurs du Pentateuque: il est risqué de vouloir expliquer un texte aussi complexe que les cinq premiers livres de la Bible à l'aide d'un seul principe, même si on l'applique uniquement aux textes narratifs. À cela s'ajoute que les exemples que A.F. Campbell cite à l'appui de sa thèse dans les deux articles mentionnés plus haut proviennent en majorité des livres de Samuel dont la composition est assez différente de celle du Pentateuque. En outre, il ne faut pas oublier que les théories sur le Pentateuque qui ont pu s'imposer sont parties non pas des textes narratifs, mais des textes législatifs (de Wette, Reuss, Graf, Kuenen, Wellhausen). Aujourd'hui, ce principe est rappelé par E. Otto, M. Fishbane et B.M. Levinson pour lesquels le Pentateuque est avant tout une *torâ*, c'est-à-dire une "loi". Le terme a un sens particulier, mais il est intègre nécessairement l'aspect juridique et législatif du Pentateuque<sup>(15)</sup>. Or, l'exégèse des lois montre à l'envi que les diverses collections de lois ne sont pas le reflet de législations parallèles dont les juges pouvaient faire usage selon les besoins et les circonstances, ce qui serait le cas si l'on voulait appliquer aux textes législatifs le principe invoqué par nos auteurs à propos des récits. Ces collections de lois se corrigent en fait l'une l'autre et il y a donc réelle évolution dans le droit biblique, quelles que soient la nature et la fonction de ces codes. Il suffit de comparer les différentes lois sur la Pâque pour s'en

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exemple, constitute a warning point to a likely pattern of future developments in human affairs". À propos des récits bibliques, plusieurs auteurs ont parlé de "temps paradigmatique"; voir par exemple S. BOORER, "The 'Paradigmatic' and 'Historiographical' Nature of the Priestly Material as a Key to its Interpretation", *Seeing Signals, Reading Signs. The Art of Exegesis. Festschrift A.F. Campbell* (ed. M.A. O'BRIEN – H.N. WALLACE) (JSOTS 415; London – New York 2004) 45-60; R.S. KAWASHIMA, *Biblical Narrative and the Death of the Rhapsode* (Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington – Indianapolis, IN 2004) 124-160; N. LOHFINK, "Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichte", *Congress Volume Göttingen 1977* (éd. W. ZIMMERLI) (VTS 29; Leiden 1978) 189-225 (213-215) = *Studien zum Pentateuch* (SBAB 4; Stuttgart 1988) 213-253 (239-242); J. NEUSNER, "Paradigmatic versus Historical Thinking: The Case of Rabbinic Judaism", *History and Theory* 36, 3 (1997) 353-377; Id., *The Idea of History in Rabbinic Judaism* (The Brill Reference Library of Judaism 12; Leiden 2004); R. SMEND, *Elemente alttestamentlichen Geschichtsdenkens* (ThSt 95; Zürich 1968) 18-23.

<sup>(15)</sup> Voir entre autres M. FISHBANE, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford 1986); E. OTTO, "Gesetzesfortschreibung und Pentateuchredaktion", *ZAW* 107 (1995) 373-392; Id., "Kritik der Pentateuchkomposition", *TRu* 60 (1995) 163-191; Id., *Der Pentateuch* (Erträge der Forschung; Darmstadt 2004); B.M. LEVINSON, «'The Right Chorale': From the Poetics of Biblical Narrative to the Hermeneutics of the Hebrew Bible», «*Not in Heaven*». Coherence and Complexity in Biblical Narrative (éd. J.P. ROSENBLATT – J.C. SITTERSON) (Bloomington, IN 1991) 129-153 (notes: 242-247); Id., *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York 1997).

rendre compte (Ex 12,1-28; 23,15; 34,18; Lv 23,5-8; Nm 28,16-25; Dt 16,1-8; cf. Éz 45,21-24). Les lois ne se placent pas sur le même pied. Elles se complètent, se modifient, se corrigent, se contredisent et s'excluent les unes les autres. Elles ne peuvent donc se placer les unes à côté des autres, mais les unes avant ou après les autres, dans un ordre diachronique. Le principe peut être discuté par certains<sup>(16)</sup>, mais il est difficile de dire, pour reprendre l'exemple de la Pâque, que les familles pouvaient faire leur choix entre les différents usages dont témoigne le Pentateuque. Les dates sont différentes, certains rituels associent étroitement Pâque et azymes, d'autres non, et le lieu où doit être sacrifié la victime varie d'une loi à l'autre et même la victime à offrir. L'explication la plus simple et la plus convaincante proposée par la majorité des spécialistes est donc bien que le droit a évolué d'une époque à l'autre et que les codes reflètent cette évolution<sup>(17)</sup>. S'il y a un choix, il est orienté par les textes et ce choix n'est pas indifférent<sup>(18)</sup>.

Pour en revenir aux récits, ces quelques réflexions obligent à ajouter quelques nuances à la théorie proposée par nos auteurs. En premier lieu, il faut dire que ces récits ne sont pas tous de même valeur. Les utilisateurs ne se trouvent pas devant un étal où ils peuvent faire leur choix selon leurs goûts ou leurs besoins. Ils assistent plutôt à une belle bagarre vocale entre différentes traditions qui veulent les convaincre de la supériorité de leurs produits.

Par ailleurs, si plusieurs versions d'une même épisode coexistent dans le concert narratif, c'est pour une large part en raison d'un principe essentiel de la tradition biblique: ce qui est ancien ne perd jamais sa valeur. La tradition procède non pas par substitution, mais plutôt par addition et correction. Cela est dû aussi à la volonté de montrer la continuité de la tradition au-delà des ruptures provoquées par l'histoire. La rédaction post-exilique, par exemple, veut à tout prix montrer que l'Israël de l'époque perse est bien l'héritier de toutes les traditions de l'Israël pré-exilique, et que cet Israël pré-exilique soit plus ou moins fictif importe peu ici. Il y a donc relectures, corrections et mises à jour, en un mot *Fortschreibung* pour employer un terme cher à l'exégèse allemande de ces dernières années<sup>(19)</sup>.

Il existe par exemple une relecture de Gn 12-50 en fonction des

<sup>(16)</sup> M. GREENBERG, "Some Postulate of Criminal Law", *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem 1960) 5-28 = *Studies in the Bible and Jewish Thought* (JPS Scholar of Distinction Series; Philadelphia – Jerusalem 1995) 25-41 = *A Song of Power and the Power of Song. Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* (ed. D.L. CHRISTENSEN) (Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 3; Winona Lake, IN 1993) 283-300; R. WESTBROOK, *Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Law* (CRB 26; Paris 1988); Id., "What is the Covenant Code?", *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law. Revision, Interpolation and Development* (ed. B.M. LEVINSON) (JSOTS 181; Sheffield 1994) 15-36; J.M. SPRINKLE, 'The Book of the Covenant'. A Literary Approach (JSOTS 174; Sheffield 1994).

<sup>(17)</sup> Voir, entre autres, E. OTTO, "pāsaḥ", *TWAT* VI, 659-682; T. VEIJOLA, "The History of the Passover in the Light of Deuteronomy 16:1-8", *ZABR* 2 (1996) 53-75.

<sup>(18)</sup> Voir entre autres B.M. LEVINSON, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford – New York 1997); *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law. Revision, Interpolation, and Development* (ed. B.M. LEVINSON) (JSOTS 181; Sheffield 1994); E. OTTO, "Gesetzesfortschreibung und Pentateuchredaktion", *ZAW* 107 (1995) 373-392; Id., "Rechtshermeneutik in der Hebräischen Bibel: Die innerbiblischen Ursprünge halachischer Bibelauslegung", *ZABR* 5 (1999) 75-98.

<sup>(19)</sup> Voir, par exemple, Ch. LEVIN, *Fortschreibungen. Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (BZAW 316; Berlin – New York 2003).

itinéraires des patriarches. Il serait possible de démontrer dans le détail, ce que nous ne pouvons faire ici, qu'une série d'oracles divins se juxtaposent à des textes antérieurs et les réinterprètent en fonction d'une idée bien précise: la terre promise est celle où Abraham est venu sur ordre de Dieu, celle où Isaac est né, a vécu et est mort<sup>(20)</sup>, et celle où Jacob est revenu après son "exil" chez son oncle Laban et où il sera enterré après sa mort en Égypte. Ces textes sont reliés entre eux en un seul système. Il s'agit de Gn 12,1-3; 13,14-17; 26,2-5; 28,13-15; 31,3; 46,1-5a<sup>(21)</sup>. Ces textes ne présentent pas exactement comme des "alternatives" ou des "enrichissements", mais des relectures qui présupposent les textes précédents et les orientent dans une direction nouvelle<sup>(22)</sup>.

De même, le début du cycle d'Abraham en Gn 12 cherche clairement à faire du patriarche un Jacob avant Jacob et un Israël avant Israël. Abraham construit notamment un autel et inaugure un culte à Sichem et à Béthel avant que Jacob ne passe à ces endroits qu'il affectionne particulièrement (Gn 12,6-8 et 28,10-19; 33,18-20; 35,1-5). En outre Abraham vient du pays de l'Euphrate où Jacob passera vingt ans et il descend en Égypte où Jacob descendra lui aussi en raison d'une famine. Ce récit de Gn 12,10-20 anticipe en outre par plus d'un trait le récit de la sortie d'Égypte<sup>(23)</sup>. Il y a donc un système d'allusions, de renvois, d'interprétations et d'anticipations qui unit le cycle d'Abraham à d'autres parties du Pentateuque.

Un autre exemple vient du livre de l'Exode. Dans le récit d'Ex 16, E. Ruprecht a bien montré que certaines parties du texte servent à réinterpréter le récit du don de la manne en fonction de la théologie de l'épreuve propre au Deutéronome<sup>(24)</sup>. Cela apparaît très clairement dans les vv. 4-5 qui font écho à Dt 8,2. Certes, il est possible de lire ces versets comme une autre possibilité de raconter ou d'interpréter le récit de la manne. Mais l'insertion se présente plutôt comme une relecture postérieure qui change le récit sur un aspect essentiel: la manne n'est plus un don, elle est l'occasion d'un test. En conclusion, les options proposées par le texte ne sont pas exactement à mettre sur le même pied, elles sont plutôt en dialogue les unes avec les autres, et ce dialogue n'est pas toujours pacifique. Certaines options, pour le dire plus clairement, ne se comprennent que si elles sont lues en fonction d'un autre

<sup>(20)</sup> Voir Gn 26,2 où Yhwh interdit à Isaac de descendre en Égypte alors qu'il invite Jacob à le faire en 46,3. D'où l'importance d'Isaac, le seul patriarche qui puisse donner de cette manière droit à la terre à tous ses descendants. Abraham n'est pas né dans la terre et Jacob a vécu vingt ans chez son oncle Laban, puis il est descendu en Égypte où il est mort.

<sup>(21)</sup> Voir BLUM, *Vätergeschichte*, 300.

<sup>(22)</sup> Voir entre autres la façon dont Wellhausen conçoit le travail exégétique dans ses *Prolegomena*, 293-294: "Mit der mechanischen Zerlegung hat die Kritik ihr Werk nicht getan, sie muß darauf hinaus, die ermittelten Einzelschriften in gegenseitigen Beziehung zu setzen, sie als Phasen eines lebendigen Processes begreiflich und auf diese Weise eine stufenmäßige Entwicklung der Tradition verfolgbar zu machen".

<sup>(23)</sup> L'idée se trouve déjà dans *GenR* 46,1 et dans le commentaire de la Genèse de Nachmanide (1197-1270). Voir M.Z. BRETTLER, "A Pre-enacted Exodus: Genesis 12:10-20", *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (London – New York 1995) 51-55; Th. RÖMER, "Typologie exodique dans les récits patriarcaux", *Typologie biblique*. De quelques figures vives (éd. R. KUNTZMANN) (LD; Paris 2002) 49-76.

<sup>(24)</sup> E. RUPRECHT, "Stellung und Bedeutung der Erzählung vom Mannawunder (Ex 16) im Aufbau der Priesterschrift", *ZAW* 86 (1974) 269-307.



texte antérieur qu'elles complètent, corrigent, mettent à jour, et contredisent en certaines occasions <sup>(25)</sup>.

Il en va de même pour un certain nombre de textes que nos auteurs classifient parmi les "enrichissements" (*enhancements*) de la tradition <sup>(26)</sup>. Ces textes ne cherchent pas toujours à prolonger ou à enrichir, mais bien à ajouter une vue différente, parfois même bien différente de celles qui précèdent. Par exemple Gn 16,15-16 fait naître Ismaël dans la tente d'Abraham alors que l'oracle des vv. 11-12 suggère qu'il naîtra et grandira dans le désert. C'est Abraham qui donne un nom à Ismaël alors que selon l'oracle, c'est Hagar qui devait le faire (16,11 et 15). Il est enfin difficile de comprendre comment Yhwh peut avoir "entendu" et exaucé Hagar (16,11b) si elle doit retourner chez sa maîtresse qui l'a maltraitée <sup>(27)</sup>. L'oracle de Gn 28,15 "créé" en grande partie la trame du cycle de Jacob et "fait" de son voyage qui, dans le contexte, est une fuite peu glorieuse, un long périple sous la conduite du Dieu de ses pères. Les derniers versets de l'histoire de Joseph (Gn 50,24-25) "créent" un lien entre l'histoire de Joseph et le récit de l'exode qui suit alors que tout le monde semble très heureux en Égypte (cf. 46,1-5a dont nous avons parlé plus haut). Dernier exemple, le récit de Nb 13-14 attribué traditionnellement au récit sacerdotal a supprimé tous les traits militaires présents dans les autres traditions sur l'exploration de la terre <sup>(28)</sup>. Il serait possible d'ajouter d'autres exemples. Disons seulement que les réflexions de nos auteurs vont souvent

<sup>(25)</sup> Ceci est confirmé par nombre d'ouvrages récents qui ont étudié les dernières rédactions du Pentateuque, post-deutéronomistes et post-sacerdotales. Voir entre autres N. LOHFINK, "Die Abänderung der Theologie des priesterlichen Geschichtswerks im Segen des Heiligkeitgesetzes. Zu Lev. 26,9.11-13", *Wort und Geschichte*, Festschrift für Karl Elliger (Hrsg. H. GESE – H.P. RÜGER) (AOAT 18; Kevelaer – Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973) 129-136 = *Studien zum Pentateuch* (SBAAT 4; Stuttgart 1988) 157-168; J.-L. SKA, "El relato del diluvio. Un relato sacerdotal y algunos fragmentos redaccionales posteriores", *EstBib* 52 (1994) 37-62; Id., "Ex 19,3b-6 et l'identité de l'Israël postexilique", *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (ed. M. VERVENNE) (BETL 126; Leuven 1996) 289-317; Id., "L'appel d'Abraham et l'acte de naissance d'Israël (Gn 12,1-4a)", *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic Literature*, Festschrift C.H.W. Brekelmans (eds. M. VERVENNE – J. LUST) (BETL 133; Leuven 1997) 367-389; E. OTTO, "Die Paradieserzählung Genesis 2-3: Eine nachpriesterschriftliche Lehrerzählung in ihrem religionshistorischen Kontext", *Jedes Ding hat seine Zeit...* Studien zur israelitischen und altorientalischen Weisheit. Festschrift D. Michel (Hrsg. A.A. DIESEL u.a.) (BZAW 241; Berlin – New York 1996) 167-192; Id., "Die nachpriesterschriftliche Pentateuchredaktion im Buch Exodus", *Studies in the Book of Exodus*. Redaction - Reception - Interpretation (ed. M. VERVENNE) (BETL 126; Leuven 1996) 61-111; M. WITTE, *Die biblische Urgeschichte*. Redaktions- und theologiegeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Genesis 1,1-11,26 (BZAW 265; Berlin – New York 1998); J.Ch. GERTZ, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung*. Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch (FRLANT 186; Göttingen 2000); F. GIUNTOLI, *L'officina della tradizione*. Studio di alcuni interventi redazionali post-sacerdotali e del loro contesto nel ciclo di Giacobbe (Gn 25,19 - 50,26) (AnBib 154; Roma 2003).

<sup>(26)</sup> Pour le cycle d'Abraham, voir *Rethinking the Pentateuch*, 35. Il est certain que la délimitation des textes pose d'énormes questions et qu'elle sera très discutée.

<sup>(27)</sup> Nos auteurs considèrent l'ensemble de Gn 16,10-16 comme "enrichissements" de la tradition (35). À notre avis, il y a à boire et à manger dans ces versets.

<sup>(28)</sup> Voir N. LOHFINK, "Die Ursünden in der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung", *Die Zeit Jesu*. Festschrift für Heinrich Schlier (Hrsg. G. BORNKAMM – K. RAHNER) (Freiburg 1970) 38-57 (52-53) = *Studien zum Pentateuch*, 169-189 (184-185). Sur Nb 13-14, voir aussi l'étude de R. ACHENBACH, "Die Erzählung von der gescheiterten Landnahme von Kadesch Barnea (Numeri 13-14) als Schlüsseltext der Redaktionsgeschichte des Pentateuch", *ZAR* 9 (2003) 56-123.



dans ce sens, mais qu'ils aurait valu la peine de souligner davantage la présence d'un dialogue entre les différentes voix qui se font entendre dans les textes et, surtout, les tentatives de créer certains ensembles narratifs.

Il est un second point qui mérite d'être approfondi, et il s'agit de la concision des récits bibliques qui peut très bien s'expliquer de différentes manières. Il y a les raisons pratiques bien connues, la rareté et la cherté du matériel (19), ou les conditions de l'écriture<sup>(29)</sup>. Et il est possible, comme nos auteurs, de penser que les textes fournissaient à leurs utilisateurs des canevas de narrations. Il faut cependant ajouter un raison toute simple, et bien connue des spécialistes de la tradition orale: la loi de l'économie (*law of thrift*) dont parlait déjà H. Gunkel à sa façon<sup>(30)</sup> et qu'explique A.B. Lord à la suite des spécialistes de la tradition orale<sup>(31)</sup>. Selon cette loi, les récits se limitent à l'essentiel et négligent tout ce qui est secondaire ou ne sert pas directement au progrès de la trame. Cette concision des récits peut ensuite fournir aux "conteurs" la possibilité d'enrichir la trame. Mais la raison de cette concision des récits est à chercher moins dans leur fin que dans leur origine et dans les conditions de leur rédaction.

En outre, toujours à propos des raisons qui ont présidé à la rédaction des récits, il est bien connu que dans le monde antique, en particulier dans le Proche-Orient ancien, s'est développé le désir de préserver et conserver traditions et documents. La constitution d'archives et la construction de bibliothèque étaient plus une œuvre de prestige et de propagande qu'une œuvre culturelle<sup>(32)</sup>. Il ne faut pas oublier que les ouvrages anciens n'étaient pas "publiés" et qu'à cette époque peu de monde, de toute manière, était capable de lire.

Enfin, les traditions et les écrits sur le passé sont conservés en vertu d'un principe bien connu dans le Proche-Orient ancien, mais aussi en Grèce: plus une tradition est ancienne et plus elle a de valeur<sup>(33)</sup>. Le principe adopté par nos auteurs — *user-base* — se vérifie sans doute à plus d'une reprise. Mais il n'est sans doute pas le seul principe d'explication, comme ils le reconnaissent eux-mêmes, et il faut l'appliquer avec les nuances requises dans les diverses parties du Pentateuque.

Le troisième point concerne le récit sacerdotal qui a beaucoup retenu l'attention de l'exégèse de langue allemande durant ces dernières années<sup>(34)</sup>.

<sup>(29)</sup> Voir à ce propos D.M. CARR, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart. Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford 2005).

<sup>(30)</sup> H. GUNKEL, *Genesis* (Göttingen 1910) xlvi, qui cite A. OLRİK, "Epische Gesetze der Volksdichtung", *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 51 (1909) 1-12 (8), et parle de l'"Einsträngigkeit" des récits de la Genèse, c'est-à-dire de leur unilinéarité.

<sup>(31)</sup> A.B. LORD, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA 1964) 50-51.

<sup>(32)</sup> Voir O. PEDERSEN, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East, 1500-300 B.C.* (Bethesda, MD 1998); L. CASSON, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven, CT 2001); K.L. SPARKS, "Near Eastern Archives and Libraries", *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible. A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody, MA 2005) 25-55.

<sup>(33)</sup> Cf. MOMIGLIANO, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, 19: "The ordinary Greek liked what lasted long or at least was very ancient". Sur ces principes, voir J.-L. SKA, *Introduction à la lecture du Pentateuque*. Clés pour l'interprétation des cinq premiers livres de la Bible (Le livre et le rouleau 5; Bruxelles 2000) 236-241.

<sup>(34)</sup> Voir, par exemple, E. OTTO, "Forschungen zur Priesterschrift", *TRu* 62 (1997) 1-50; Th. RÖMER, "Le Pentateuque toujours en question: Bilan et perspectives après un quart de siècle de débat", *Congress Volume Basel 2001* (ed. A. LEMAIRE) (VTS 92; Leiden 2002) 343-374, spéc. 346-354.

Si je concorde avec nos auteurs en ce qui concerne l'abandon d'un document yahviste et d'un document élohiste, je reste convaincu de l'existence d'un "écrit" sacerdotal, quitte à redéfinir le terme "écrit" s'il le faut. En deux mots, il ne peut s'agir d'une simple collection de récits juxtaposés parce que le récit sacerdotal possède deux caractéristiques essentielles dont le Yahviste et l'Élohiste de la théorie documentaire classique sont privés: un style propre (je dis bien un style propre et non seulement un vocabulaire propre) et une vision unifiée de toute l'histoire des origines d'Israël (Ex 6,2-8).

Le premier point est essentiel. En effet, il suffit de relire l'ouvrage classique de J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford 1961) pour se convaincre à nouveau, si cela est nécessaire, que l'exégèse ne peut se baser uniquement sur l'analyse du vocabulaire. Et les apports de la linguistique moderne, en particulier le champ d'investigation appelé *discourse analysis* ont démontré qu'une langue n'est pas faite de mots, ni même de phrases, mais que son unité de base est le "discours", plus concrètement le paragraphe fait d'une série de phrases<sup>(35)</sup>. Ces études nous invitent de façon pressante à abandonner ce qu'on a pu appeler *Wortexegese* ou *Kleinexegese*. À propos de l'écrit sacerdotal, il vaudrait la peine de relire l'étude de S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* (AnBib 50; Rome 1971). Cette étude porte bien le titre de *Narrative Style* et non celui de *Narrative Vocabulary*. Or, le style caractéristique de l'écrit sacerdotal est une constante qui permet de l'identifier facilement: refrains, reprises, schémas et structures, termes-clés, rythmes et cadence régulières, etc. Il est par contre bien plus difficile de décrire de façon concrète et technique le "style" du Yahviste, quel qu'il soit.

En second lieu, le récit sacerdotal est bien le premier à unir promesses patriarcales et exode en une seule conception narrative et théologique. C'est lui qui fait de l'exode l'accomplissement d'un serment fait aux patriarches (Ex 2,23-25\* et surtout Ex 6,2-8)<sup>(36)</sup>. Ce qui n'était encore que juxtaposition et simple succession chronologique dans les "petits credos" du Deutéronome (6,21-23; 26,5b-9) est articulé en deux phases distinctes selon le schéma logique promesse (serment) — accomplissement de la promesse.

Il faut ajouter à cela quelques remarques sur des thèmes importants qui traversent tout le récit sacerdotal — et je laisse entre parenthèse pour le moment le problème de la fin de ce récit sacerdotal —<sup>(37)</sup>. Notons par

<sup>(35)</sup> Voir *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature. What It Is and What It Offers* (ed. W.R. BODINE) (SBLSS; Atlanta, GA 1995); D. SCHIFFIN — D. TANNEN — H.E. HAMILTON, *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (Oxford, UK — Malden, MA 2001).

<sup>(36)</sup> Voir J.-L. SKA, "La place d'Ex 6,2-8 dans la narration de l'exode", ZAW 94 (1982) 530-548; ID., "Quelques remarques sur P\* et la dernière rédaction du Pentateuque", *Le Pentateuque en question* (éd. A. de PURY) (Le Monde de la Bible 19; Genève 1989, 1992, 2001) 95-125. Cette vue a été amplement développée et corroborée par K. SCHMID, *Erzväter und Exodus. Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1999).

<sup>(37)</sup> Sur ce point, voir R. ACHENBACH, *Die Vollendung der Tora. Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Numeribuches im Kontext von Hexateuch und Pentateuch* (BZAR 3; Wiesbaden 2003) 14-22; M. BAUKS, "Une histoire sans fin". L'impasse herméneutique de la notion de 'pays' dans l'œuvre sacerdotale (P\*). Quelques réflexions suite à la lecture d'un livre récent [Ch. FREVEL, *Mit Blick auf das Land*], ETR 78 (2003) 255-268; Ch. FREVEL, *Mit Blick auf das Land die Schöpfung erinnern. Zum Ende der Priesterschrift* (HBS 23; Freiburg i. Breisgau 2000); T. POLA, *Die ursprüngliche*

exemple la reprise du thème et de la phraséologie de la création, en particulier de la séparation des eaux et de la terre ferme (Gn 1,9-10), dans le récit du déluge (Gn 8,14) et du passage de la mer (Ex 14,16.22.29)<sup>(38)</sup>; la correction des normes sur la nourriture de Gn 1,29-30 dans l'introduction et la conclusion du récit du déluge (9,2-3); l'insistance sur le don de la nourriture en Gn 1,29-30; 6,21 et dans le récit du don de la manne (Ex 16,15). La cosmologie du récit sacerdotal du déluge est en harmonie avec celle de Gn 1 et avec aucune autre cosmogonie de la Genèse (1,2.6-8 et 7,11; 8,2a; il n'y des eaux au-dessus du firmament que dans le récit de Gn 1). Les différences entre les deux récits s'expliquent parce que le contexte requiert plus de précision et parce qu'il ne faut jamais oublier que l'essence du style sacerdotal est "variation within system"<sup>(39)</sup>. Il y a par ailleurs de claires correspondances entre le récit du déluge et l'alliance avec Abraham (Gn 7,11.13-16a et 17,23-27). Des deux côtés, les récits mentionnent l'âge de Noé et d'Abraham (7,11a et 17,24), ils insistent sur le jour de l'événement (בִּשְׁעָרֵי הַיָּם הָיָה, 7,11 et 17,26), ils fournissent une liste de tous les participants (7,13-16a; 17,23.26-27), ils répètent la description de l'événement principal (7,13.16 et 17,23.26) et il signalent que tout se passe pour exécuter un ordre divin (7,16a et 17,23b). Le début du déluge et la circoncision d'Abraham et de toute sa maison coïncident avec deux moments essentiels de l'histoire sacerdotale: d'un côté un univers disparaît dans le déluge pour laisser place à l'univers post-diluvien qui est le nôtre; de l'autre, Abraham et sa descendance se voient accorder une place particulière dans l'univers et au sein de toute l'humanité. La description de la séparation d'Abraham et de Lot est analogue à celle de la séparation de Jacob et d'Ésaü et celle-ci advient pour les mêmes raisons (Gn 12,5; 13,6.11b.12; 31,18; 36,6-8; cf. 45,6-7). Le récit sacerdotal

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*Priesterschrift*. Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von P<sup>s</sup> (WMANT 70; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995). Voir aussi RÖMER, "Le Pentateuque toujours en question", 347-350. Aujourd'hui, beaucoup d'auteurs suivent Pola et considèrent que le récit sacerdotal ne se prolonge pas dans le livre des Nombres. A tort, à notre avis. (1) Le style de P se reconnaît en particulier en Nb 13-14 (voir McEVENUE, *Narrative Style*, 107-127); (2) il y a moyen de distinguer nettement le récit sacerdotal "pacifique" d'une tendance ultérieure qui cherche à re-militariser le récit de la marche au désert en vue de la conquête; (3) il est inexact de dire que le récit sacerdotal s'intéresse uniquement au culte; il s'agit d'un préjugé tenace qui domine une partie de l'exégèse du Pentateuque depuis au moins Graf et Wellhausen; (4) le récit sacerdotal doit, d'une manière ou d'une autre résoudre le problème de la promesse de la terre puisque l'exode est vu comme accomplissement de cette promesse (Ex 6,2-8). Le Dieu du récit sacerdotal va-t-il se comporter comme nombre de nos politiciens et oublier ses promesses une fois installé dans son sanctuaire et comblé d'offrandes et de sacrifices? Voir, pour des vues différentes de celles de T. Pola, K. ELLIGER, "Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung", *ZTK* 49 (1952) 121-142 = *Kleine Schriften zum Alten Testament* (TBü 32; München 1966) 174-198 (un peu oublié dans la discussion); LOHFINK, "Die Priesterschrift und die Geschichte"; cf. D. NOCQUET, "La mort des patriarches, d'Aaron et de Moïse. L'apport de l'écriture sacerdotale à la constitution du Pentateuque à l'époque perse", *Transeuphratène* 29 (2005) 133-153.

<sup>(38)</sup> J.-L. SKA, "Séparation des eaux et de la terre ferme dans le récit sacerdotal", *NRT* 103 (1981) 512-532.

<sup>(39)</sup> McEVENUE, *Narrative Style*, 51. Or, bien malheureusement, on a souvent réduit le style du sacerdotal à son exact contraire, c'est-à-dire à un "system without variation", ce qui est tout à fait faux. Cf. aussi la réflexion de J. KUGEL, "On the Bible and Literary Criticism", *Prooftexts* 1 (1981) 217-236, 224: "Symmetry is not prized in the Bible, but slight variation".

élimine aussi tous les conflits entre patriarches (Abraham et Lot, Ismaël et Isaac, Ésaü et Jacob, Joseph et ses frères)<sup>(40)</sup>. Il y a enfin une série de correspondances très claires entre le récit de la création et celui de l'inauguration de la tente de la rencontre (Gn 1 et Gn 39–40). En particulier, Ex 40,34 dit que Moïse conclut son travail comme Dieu en Gn 2,2. Dieu vit son œuvre et la trouve “bonne” (Gn 1,31), tout comme Moïse voit son œuvre terminée et la trouve conforme aux ordres divins (Ex 39,43). Dieu bénit le septième jour (Gn 2,3) tout comme Moïse bénit la tente de la rencontre (Ex 39,43b). Il est inutile d'insister sur un point qui a été noté et souligné par bien des commentateurs<sup>(41)</sup>. Ceci suffira, je suppose, à montrer qu'il est difficile de renoncer à un “récit sacerdotal” que nos auteurs retrouvent à l'occasion, par exemple dans le “récit El-Shaddai” de la Genèse ou le “récit du sanctuaire” de l'Exode<sup>(42)</sup>.

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En conclusion, il existe trop de liens entre les diverses parties attribuées au récit sacerdotal pour qu'on puisse le morceler en ses diverses composantes. Il existe bien un récit sacerdotal, fait sans doute de divers récits sacerdotaux, assemblés et unifiés, mais ceux-ci entrent dans une composition qui a son unité de fond et de forme, une unité stylistique, thématique et théologique.

Au terme de cette lecture, il faut reconnaître que l'ouvrage de nos auteurs est stimulant, et les réflexions que nous venons de faire en sont la preuve. Les hésitations que nous avons exprimées et les nuances que nous avons ajoutées ne devraient pas faire oublier les nombreuses observations de détail et les innombrables notations sur la théologie du Pentateuque qui sont d'une grande profondeur.

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<sup>(40)</sup> Voir WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena*, 331 et bien d'autres après lui.

<sup>(41)</sup> Voir entre autres M. WEINFELD, “Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord - The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Gen 1:1–2:3”, *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (éd. A. CAQUOT – M. DELCOR) (AOAT 212; Neukirchen-Vluyn – Kevelaer 1981) 501-512; J. BLENKINSOPP, *The Pentateuch* (New York 1992) 217-218; P. WEIMAR, “Sinai und Schöpfung. Komposition und Theologie der priesterlichen Sinaigeschichte”, *RB* (1988) 337-385; M. BAUKS, “Le Shabbat: un temple dans le temps”, *ETR* 77 (2002) 473-490. Nos auteurs écartent un peu vite cette opinion et sans trop d'arguments, à notre avis (*Rethinking the Pentateuch*, 87, n. 146).

<sup>(42)</sup> Nous n'entrons pas ici dans la discussion épineuse au sujet de la fin du récit sacerdotal. Il voudrait la peine, sans doute, de discuter les liens entre Ex 6,4.8 d'une part et Nb 14,30-31; 20,12 de l'autre.

# RECENSIONES

## Vetus Testamentum

Detlef JERICKE, *Abraham in Mamre*. Historische und exegetische Studien zur Region von Hebron und zu Genesis 11,27–19,38 (Culture & History of the Ancient Near East 17). Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2003. 16 × 24,5. 395 p.

L'auteur de cet ouvrage se donne pour terrain d'études le cycle d'Abraham, dans le livre de la Genèse, et le projet de répondre à la question: «Quand et dans quelles conditions historiques les expressions théologiques qui ont conduit à la notion d'«Abraham à Mamré» ont-elles été formulées?». Pour mener à bien cette recherche, D. Jericke met en œuvre de manière parallèle et indépendante deux enquêtes bien documentées, l'une archéologique, l'autre exégétique, avant de chercher à en croiser les résultats. L'auteur privilégie les attestations présumées les plus anciennes du toponyme Mamré dans le texte de la Genèse, en Gn 13,18; 18,1, et laisse de côté les occurrences de Gn 23,17.19, appartenant à la notice d'inhumation de Sara, texte considéré, à la suite de E. Blum, comme beaucoup plus tardif.

Mamré apparaît en Gn 18,1 comme le terme géographique d'une pérégrination d'Abraham, prenant son point de départ en Mésopotamie, et aboutissant en Canaan. Cette logique narrative qui s'appuie sur l'itinéraire d'Abraham conduit l'auteur à délimiter au sein du livre de la Genèse la péripécie Gn 11,27–19,38 comme objet privilégié de son étude.

L'enquête archéologique (16-48) qui précède l'étude exégétique (97-296) débouche sur deux résultats principaux: 1) Le toponyme «Mamré» correspond au site archéologique de Hirbet Nimra, situé à 1100 mètres au Nord d'Hébron, et dont l'occupation humaine ne remonte pas au-delà du 6<sup>ème</sup> siècle avant notre ère, c'est-à-dire au début de l'époque perse. 2) Les fouilles du site de Ramet-el-Halil, situé plus au nord, ne permettent pas de mettre au jour une occupation antérieure à l'époque hérodienne.

Ces résultats de l'enquête archéologique vont fournir à l'auteur des critères qu'il présente comme significatifs pour dater les traditions littéraires se référant au toponyme de Mamré, en particulier Gn 18,1 où, contrairement à Gn 13,18, Mamré est cité sans référence à la ville d'Hébron, et présuppose donc la connaissance géographique du lecteur.

L'élément le plus ancien de l'ensemble littéraire 11,27–19,38 est représenté, selon D. Jericke, par les «tol'dôt» appartenant à un récit plus large présentant Abraham, simple habitant de Canaan, comme l'ancêtre de Jacob-Israël et précisant les liens qui unissent ces deux personnages aux peuples du Proche-Orient ancien. Les formules de «tol'dôt» ne sont donc pas consi-

dérées, selon cette hypothèse, comme une simple composante d'une tradition sacerdotale, mais, à la suite de B.D. Eerdmans (*Alttestamentliche Studien I. Die Komposition der Genesis* [Gießen 1908]), comme élément structurant d'une collection narrative indépendante débutant en Gn 5,1. L'auteur ne considère donc pas les notices de «tol'dôt» comme des «superstructures» tardives, mais bien comme un élément caractéristique d'un récit premier sur lequel vont se greffer plusieurs relectures successives. Cette analyse doit être confrontée à différentes hypothèses contradictoires. E. Blum, par exemple, relie le cadre que fournissent les formules de «tol'dôt» à l'histoire patriarcale à une relecture sacerdotale de grande ampleur (*Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* [WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984] 420-458). De même, pour F. Crüsemann, «le cadre du système généalogique doit être attribué à un écrit sacerdotal», et contribue à assurer l'unité des éléments divers composant l'histoire des patriarches («Menschheit und Volk. Israels Selbstdefinition im genealogischen System der Genesis», *Evangelische Theologie* 58 [1998] 180-195, ici 184.186).

Les relectures délimitées par D. Jericke sont les suivantes: tout d'abord, une *relecture sacerdotale*, qui est le fait du groupe des réfugiés de Babylonie, et à laquelle peut être attribué le récit de Gn 17, qui insiste d'une part sur le don du pays à Abraham, comme propriété durable (Gn 17,8), et qui précise d'autre part le statut des fils d'Abraham: Ismaël et Isaac. C'est à ce stade rédactionnel qu'auraient été intercalés entre les traditions concernant Jacob et les traditions concernant Abraham les récits liés à la figure d'Isaac. La formule de «tol'dôt» de Gn 25,19, primitivement liée à Abraham, aurait alors été transférée à Isaac (cf. 141s.).

D. Jericke souligne l'opposition qui existe entre la figure patriarcale de Gn 17 et le personnage d'Abraham tel que le décrit le récit de Gn 18,1s. En effet, en introduisant le toponyme Mamré, le récit de Gn 18-19 correspond à une nouvelle étape du développement du texte, dont l'objet pourrait consister à mettre en scène l'opposition entre la cité de Jérusalem, représentée par Sodome, et des populations rurales liées à la figure d'Abraham – à laquelle est ici attaché le site de Mamré. Ainsi, la nouvelle centralisation politique et religieuse, corollaire de la construction du second Temple conduirait à des oppositions «périphériques», dont Gn 18-19 serait l'expression narrative et le reflet. D'autre part, l'usage isolé du toponyme Mamré dans le récit ne saurait, en fonction des données archéologiques mentionnées plus haut, remonter au-delà du 5<sup>ème</sup> siècle avant notre ère.

La dernière étape de la composition de l'ensemble Gn 11,27-19,38 est attribuée par l'auteur à une rédaction «yahviste», incluant en particulier Gn 13,18 et contenant ainsi un manifeste en faveur d'une décentralisation du culte, puisque Hébron y est envisagé en tant que lieu cultuel. Gn 15 est rattaché à cette dernière rédaction dont les accents prophétiques et l'ouverture internationale à la diaspora juive sont soulignés.

Ainsi, le toponyme «Mamré» serait utilisé par des récits dont la fonction consisterait à exprimer la réaction de la population rurale de la région d'Hébron à la deuxième vague du retour des exilés, au 5<sup>ème</sup> siècle, et à ses conséquences politiques et religieuses. D. Jericke émet l'hypothèse que le renforcement de l'autonomie de la province de Judée, dans le cadre de l'empire perse, ait eu comme corollaire des concessions territoriales (la perte

de la région d'Hébron au profit d'Édom), entraînant la réaction hostile des populations locales.

Quelle appréciation porter sur résultats de la recherche exposée dans cette publication? D. Jericke aboutit à des hypothèses socio-historiques stimulantes, concernant en particulier le statut de la région d'Hébron et son opposition au «centre» — Jérusalem — à l'époque perse. La littérature post-exilique porte en effet la marque d'une opposition entre ville et campagnes. Cependant, cette étude ne souffre-t-elle pas quelque peu de la «porte d'entrée» que s'est donnée son auteur? Le toponyme «Mamré» représente-t-il en effet un terme-clef pour la compréhension du cycle d'Abraham et de sa composition?

D'autre part, la délimitation d'un ensemble littéraire Gn 11,27–19,38 au sein des récits concernant Abraham n'est-elle pas trop brièvement justifiée dans l'introduction de l'ouvrage (cf. 3-9) et finalement quelque peu artificielle? De plus, la «rencontre» entre les résultats de l'enquête archéologique et ceux de l'étude exégétique joue finalement sur des éléments limités: l'absence d'occupation du site de Mamré avant le 6<sup>ème</sup> siècle invite à considérer comme relativement tardive la composition littéraire des récits de Gn 18–19. Ce résultat ponctuel laisse ouvertes plusieurs questions exégétiques concernant le cycle d'Abraham: qu'en est-il de l'existence et de la délimitation de traditions anciennes, pré-exiliques, concernant Abraham? Comment les résultats proposés entrent-ils en débat avec l'hypothèse d'une édition exilique de diverses traditions anciennes concernant Abraham (cf. en particulier J. VAN SETERS, *Prologue to History. The Yahwist as historian in Genesis* [Zürich 1992]) — édition qui pourrait avoir pour objet de justifier le droit territorial des non-exilés. Comment évaluer enfin l'hypothèse classique qui consiste à considérer les éléments sacerdotaux du texte comme appartenant à une tradition sacerdotale indépendante concernant Abraham, faisant partie d'un document sacerdotal, secondairement fusionné avec des traditions non sacerdotales? (cf. sur ce point T. POLA, *Die Ursprüngliche Priesterschrift. Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von Pg.* [WMANT 70; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995]; E.L. OTTO, «Forschungen zur Priesterschrift», *Theologische Rundschau* 62 [1997] 1-50).

En définitive, si l'enquête de D. Jericke permet de mettre en relief de manière convaincante les conflits d'intérêts qui marquent l'époque post-exilique, conflit entre une compréhension centralisée de l'organisation de la Judée perse, et une compréhension préservant l'autonomie économique et religieuse des éléments «périphériques», ses résultats proprement exégétiques, et la chronologie des textes proposée entre en débat avec les publications précédentes concernant l'histoire de la composition du «cycle d'Abraham».

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Bernhard LEHNART, *Prophet und König im Nordreich Israel. Studien zur sogenannten vorklassischen Prophetie im Nordreich Israel anhand der Samuel-, Elija- und Elischa-Überlieferungen* (VTS 96), Leiden-Boston, Brill 2003. vii + 520 p. 16 × 23,5

Ce volume dense est une version remaniée de la thèse que l'auteur a présentée en 1996 à Francfort, sous la direction de Norbert Lohfink. Après l'introduction (délimitation du sujet et option quant à l'origine de l'Histoire deutéronomiste) (1-12), il comprend trois parties consacrées respectivement à l'histoire de Saül et Samuel (13-176), à celle d'Élie (177-357) et à celle d'Élisée (359-475). La structure de l'exposé est identique pour les deux premières parties: 1) une présentation succincte du texte et de l'état de la recherche; 2) une «analyse diachronique» fouillée, qui tente de distinguer les différents niveaux de rédaction du texte; 3) la présentation synthétique des résultats de cette enquête, l'accent étant placé sur le ou les niveaux les plus anciens; 4) l'étude des relations entre le prophète et le roi dans les textes pré-deutéronomistes; 5) un essai de «mise en situation historique» de ces mêmes textes, avec les questions de leur datation, des milieux porteurs de leur tradition et enfin de l'historicité des faits rapportés. Le plan de la troisième partie est adapté aux problèmes spécifiques de l'histoire d'Élisée, qui semble composée de matériaux beaucoup moins remaniés par Dtr; les questions qui se posent sont donc moins celle de la distinction entre tradition et rédaction que celles de l'unité des récits rapportés en 2 R 2–10 et de leur insertion dans l'«Histoire deutéronomiste». Les trois parties sont juxtaposées sans réel effort de synthèse, les liens étant assurés ici et là au cours de l'exposé. L'ouvrage se termine par un court résumé (477-482), une liste des abréviations, une bibliographie (485-510) et un index biblique (511-520).

Le premier ensemble que l'A. étudie est formé par les textes qui mettent en scène le roi Saül et le prophète Samuel en 1 S 9–31. À la base se trouverait un récit comportant plusieurs épisodes, certains d'entre eux reprenant un texte ou une tradition indépendante introduite dans l'ensemble par l'addition d'éléments rédactionnels:

- l'onction secrète de Saül comme *nāgîd* (1 S 9,1–10,16\*); ce récit indépendant est relié aux épisodes qui suivent par une série d'additions rédactionnelles;

- la désignation publique de Saül comme roi par le sort (10,21bβ-23.24b.25-26\*); le début de l'épisode est perdu;

- la libération par Saül de Yabesh de Galaad (11,1-15\*); ce récit indépendant est enrichi par l'addition des vv. 12\*.13.15\*, destinés à le concilier avec ce qui précède;

- les succès de sa maison sur les Philistins (13,2–14,47\*); ce texte indépendant est inclus dans l'ensemble par l'addition du conflit entre le prophète et le roi en 13,7-15\*;

- la victoire sur les Amalécites et le deuxième conflit entre Saül et Samuel (15,1a.3.4\*.5.7-9.12-13abα.14-22.30-35aα);

- la consultation du spectre de Samuel, qui annonce la mort du roi et de ses fils (28,4-16.19bβ-25);

- la bataille de Gelboé et la mort de Saül et trois de ses fils (31,1-13).

Cette *Samuel-Saul Komposition* (SSK), qui ne parle pas de David, aurait sans doute été écrite dans l'Israël du Nord peu de temps après la séparation des deux royaumes et, en tout cas, avant l'an 800, dans le but de légitimer la nouvelle monarchie. C'est YHWH qui a voulu cette institution, comprise dans la ligne des Juges-sauveurs! Lehnart ne dit pas clairement qui l'auteur veut convaincre: les nostalgiques de la royauté davidico-salomonienne (cf. 478-479) ou les partisans de l'ordre pré-monarchique présenté comme «acéphale» (cf. 173-174)? En tout cas, la royauté apparaît comme une institution limitée à la défense contre l'envahisseur étranger, par opposition à la monarchie davidique. Surtout, elle est entièrement dépendante du prophète. Le spécialiste de la divination donne ses ordres au roi, ce qui se démarque de la pratique proche-orientale commune.

Que faut-il penser de tout cela? Le document reconstitué par Lehnart a une certaine cohérence. Par exemple, il est exact que la scène de l'onction secrète de Saül n'entre pas en concurrence avec celle de sa désignation publique, et l'ensemble est marqué par une progression, qui va de la parfaite entente entre le prophète et le roi (jusqu'au chap. 11) à la rupture définitive (chap. 28) en passant par deux scènes de conflit de plus en plus aigu (chap. 13 et chap. 15). Cette cohérence est cependant très relative. Ainsi, l'épisode du tirage au sort ne mentionne pas Samuel, ce qui oblige à supposer la perte du début du texte. De même, la SSK ne mentionne pas la mort de Samuel, pourtant supposée par l'épisode de En-Dor (28,4 dépend de 25,1a, lui-même lié à Dtr, 92-93). La victoire sur les Amalécites (chap. 15) est racontée après le sommaire qui devrait conclure le règne de Saül (14,47), sommaire qui étend d'une manière irréaliste ses prouesses et semble inspiré par l'histoire de David (2 S 8,3.5-6.13; 10,1-19; 12,26-31). Il n'est pas certain que le chap. 15 lui-même contienne des éléments anciens; le vocabulaire, analysé par F. Foresti (*The Rejection of Saul in the Perspective of the Deuteronomistic School. A Study of 1 Sam 15 and Related Texts* [Studia Theologica Teresianum 5; Roma 1984]), est surtout deutéronomiste, y compris pour les versets que Lehnart tient pour primitifs, et il en va de même pour la théologie (la place centrale de l'anathème, cf. Dt 13,13-16; 20,10-18; Jos 6-7 et 10-11; le discours du prophète comprenant rappel des bienfaits divins, reproche et condamnation; l'aveu, l'intercession et le retour en grâce; cf. 12,7b-15a Dtr). D'autre part, on peut se demander si un tel document était vraiment de nature à légitimer l'institution royale «nouvelle» aux yeux de ses lecteurs. En effet, il insiste lourdement sur le conflit entre Jonathan et Saül, qui n'a pas le beau rôle (chap. 13-14) et plus encore sur celui qui oppose Saül et Samuel, et il s'achève avec la mort ignominieuse du roi (notons que 1 S 31 ne fait pas l'objet d'une étude précise). Cela dit, il faut s'interroger sur le fait que, dans la *Vorlage* de trois scènes au moins (10,21-16\*; 11,1-11\*; 13-14\*), Samuel n'apparaît pas davantage que dans la scène finale de la mort de Saül à Gelboé; il semble bien que cette figure n'était pas connue des récits les plus anciens concernant Saül.

Il faut d'ailleurs poser une question plus radicale: la SSK a-t-elle existé comme document isolé de l'histoire de David? Pour en être certain, il aurait fallu élargir l'enquête à l'ensemble des textes s'étendant de 1 S 8 à 2 S 7 au moins, au lieu d'opter a priori pour un découpage dicté par les scènes de rencontre entre Saül et Samuel. L'enquête que j'ai moi-même menée (*La loi*

*du plus fort*. Histoire de la rédaction des récits davidiques, de 1 Samuel 8 à 1 Rois 2 [BETL 154; Leuven 2000]), publiée trop tard pour être prise en considération par Lehnart, n'aboutit pas au même résultat. Deux des pièces que Lehnart tient pour originellement indépendantes (1 S 11\*; 13-14\*) préparent en réalité le lecteur à accepter l'autorité de David: la légitimité royale de Saül n'est affirmée (chap. 11) que pour être aussitôt transférée sur Jonathan (chap. 13-14\*), qui s'empresse d'en remettre les insignes à David (18,3-4). Le récit le plus ancien des débuts de David (16,14-23) suppose d'ailleurs que le lecteur connaisse déjà Saül, son pouvoir et sa disgrâce. Quant à l'onction de ce dernier, elle est donnée à un homme qui n'en est pas digne, selon les critères humains: il appartient au plus petit clan de la plus petite tribu (9,21, que Lehnart écarte pour la seule raison que ce motif reviendra en 15,17 (38); en fait, l'auteur de ce verset connaît le chap. 9 et s'en inspire); elle est parallèle à l'onction de David par le même Samuel (16,1-13), avec la même insistance sur l'insignifiance de l'élu, dernier fils de la famille; ces deux scènes s'inscrivent dans une série de textes rédactionnels qui légitiment le pouvoir de Salomon, alors que tout le monde attendait Adonias, son frère aîné (1 R 1-2). Bref, je crains qu'il ne soit pas possible de reconstituer une histoire de Saül et Samuel indépendante des récits davidiques.

À la base de l'histoire d'Élie se trouvent, pour Lehnart, des récits ayant pour cadre commun la sécheresse (*Dürre-Karmel-Komposition* ou DKK, 1 R 17-18\*), ainsi que les récits indépendants du voyage au mont Horeb (19,3abβ.4abα.5b.6a.8\*.9a\*.11a\*.13abα.15aβ\*.18-21; le début de ce texte est perdu) et de la mort d'Ochozias (2 R 1,2-8.17aα). Le récit de la résurrection du fils de la veuve (17,17-24) est une composition tardive dérivée de l'histoire d'Élisée (2 R 4), tandis que l'histoire de la vigne de Nabot (chap. 21) n'a été rattachée au cycle d'Élie que par DTR I, à l'époque de Josias. L'histoire d'Élisée, quant à elle, a été formée à partir de trois blocs traditionnels (2 R 2-10\* ou *Elischa-Komposition*; l'épisode du siège de Samarie, 6,24-7,20\*; le récit de la révolution de Jéhu, chap. 9-10\*), introduits en plusieurs étapes dans les livres des Rois. Les récits pré-deutéronomistes proviennent tous de milieux prophétiques liés aux *b'néy hann'biyîm*, dont l'existence n'est attestée que dans la royauté du Nord; le plus ancien est celui de 2 R 9-10\*, composé sous la dynastie de Jéhu. Si la nature plus ou moins conflictuelle des rapports entre le roi et le prophète dépend de la conjoncture politique, chacun de ces récits prolonge à sa manière l'interprétation de la royauté proposée par la SSK. Jéhu, oint par un disciple d'Élisée (2 R 9,1-10) est l'équivalent d'un Juge-sauveur, qui délivre Israël du pouvoir maléfique de Jézabel. Dans la DKK comme dans la SSK, le roi est soumis au prophète; c'est d'ailleurs Élie qui extermine les prophètes de Baal au torrent du Qishôn (1 R 18,40), à l'endroit où Déborah et Barak avaient massacré Sisera et son armée. Il en va de même dans la *Elisha-Komposition*, où le roi d'Israël appelle Élisée «mon père» (2 R 6,21; 13,14); ici aussi, le prophète joue le rôle du Juge-sauveur, qui délivre Israël des Araméens (2 R 6,8-23; 13,14-19). L'aboutissement de ce développement se trouve en 2 R 2,1-15: l'Esprit qui animait les Juges-sauveurs et après eux Saül et David repose à présent sur Élie (nouveau Moïse et nouveau Josué, cf. Ex 14 et Jos 3-4), qui le transmet à Élisée, alors que le roi ne joue plus aucun rôle.

La validité des résultats obtenus dépend de la *Literarkritik*. Pour le cycle

d'Élisée, je n'ai pas d'objection majeure à faire valoir, sinon en ce qui concerne le texte-clé du récit de la succession prophétique (2 R 2). Pour Lehnart, les vv. 1-15 forment l'introduction homogène de la *Elischa-Komposition*, tandis que les vv. 16-18 forment une addition tardive, proche de la tradition d'Ézéchiél (373-377). Cette hypothèse me semble contestable. En effet, la double traversée du Jourdain correspond au miracle de la mer des Roseaux (Ex 14) dans sa rédaction P et au passage du même Jourdain par Josué (Jos 3-4) dans sa rédaction post-exilique; le motif du manteau prophétique joue ici le même rôle que le bâton de Moïse en Ex 14; l'enlèvement d'Élie est présenté comme une théophanie, avec le motif récent de la tempête (*s'ārāh*, vv. 1.11; cf. Jb 38,1; 40,6; Ps 107,25.29; Is 40,24; 41,16; Ez 1,4), et le seul récit comparable de l'enlèvement d'un homme vers le ciel est celui d'Hénoch (Gn 5,24), texte que l'on attribue à P; tout cela va dans le sens d'une rédaction tardive, qui a pour but de faire du thaumaturge Élisée un combattant de YHWH contre Baal, à la suite d'Élie. Ajoutons à l'appui de cette hypothèse que la relation Élie-Élisée est calquée sur celle qui unit Moïse et Josué: outre la double traversée de l'eau, on peut noter que la scène du départ d'Élie a lieu au-delà du Jourdain, face à Jéricho, ce qui correspond aux plaines de Moab et au mont Nébo, lieu de la mort de Moïse (Dt 34, rédaction finale du Pentateuque); Élisée reçoit une part de l'Esprit d'Élie (vv. 9.15), comme les Anciens ont reçu une part de l'Esprit de Moïse (Nb 11,17.25, rédaction finale du Pentateuque). Si 2 R 2,1-15 est un texte post-exilique, c'est la datation de la *Elischa-Komposition* dans son ensemble qui est remise en question (cf. 441), et la mention des *b'néy hann'biyām* n'est pas limitée aux textes de l'Israël du Nord avant 722. Cela dit, on peut maintenir sans difficulté l'ancienneté de la plupart des récits relatifs à Élisée.

Le cas du cycle d'Élie me paraît plus problématique. Sans entrer ici dans le détail de la discussion, il faudrait à tout le moins examiner la possibilité d'une projection sur une histoire située au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle d'un conflit bien postérieur: celui qui oppose les prophètes «critiques» (Amos, Isaïe, Jérémie...) et les rois de leurs temps, et plus encore l'interprétation de ce conflit par l'école deutéronomiste du temps de l'Exil. Dans la DKK, par exemple, un seul épisode suppose des relations positives entre le souverain et le prophète: c'est celui de l'annonce du retour de la pluie (1 R 18,41-46), préparé par 17,7b («Il n'y avait pas eu de pluie dans le pays»), où l'on trouve le même mot *gèšēm*, «pluie»; Élie y figure comme un thaumaturge à la manière d'Élisée. Tout le reste de la DKK telle qu'elle est reconstituée par Lehnart peut s'expliquer soit comme un décalque de l'histoire d'Élisée (ainsi, le miracle de la farine et de l'huile, 17,8-16), soit comme une mise en scène des débats qui agitent les Judéens au temps de l'Exil (ainsi, l'épisode du Carmel, 18,20-40, où l'on peut reconnaître deux rédactions Dtr).

Pour ces diverses raisons, je pense que la perspective générale proposée par Lehnart repose sur des bases fragiles. Il me paraît dommage, à cet égard, que les rédactions deutéronomistes ne soient pas étudiées pour elles-mêmes, mais seulement pour en distinguer les matériaux plus anciens; cet examen aurait peut-être permis une contre-épreuve. Dans l'état actuel de la recherche, en tout cas, l'examen critique des textes bibliques ne me paraît pas susceptible de reconstituer une évolution nette des traditions prophétiques antérieures à Amos.

Au-delà de ce jugement qui peut paraître sévère, je reconnais volontiers que l'ouvrage ne manque pas de qualités. On le consultera avec intérêt pour la clarté de ses états de la question, le plus souvent limités aux travaux de langue allemande, mais aussi pour ses analyses détaillées des textes et sur un certain nombre d'études de questions particulières, par exemple les liens entre prophètes individuels et prophétisme collectif.

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Hyun Chul Paul KIM, *Ambiguity, Tension, and Multiplicity in Deutero-Isaiah* (Studies in Biblical Literature 52). New York - Washington - Baltimore, Peter Lang 2003. XVI-289 p. 16 × 23,5 €72.

Die im Titel angekündigten Aspekte beziehen sich neben Spannungsfeldern verschiedenster Art erwartungsgemäß auch auf die Gestalt des Jahweknechts. Das Hauptaugenmerk gilt jedoch der Spannung zwischen Universalismus (Heil für die Völkerwelt) und Partikularismus (Erwählung Israels).

Zu dieser Problematik wird denn auch im 1. Kapitel (3-40; 217-223) ein Forschungsüberblick geboten, in dem annähernd 30 Autoren zu Worte kommen. Das 2. Kapitel (41-52; 223-226), das zusammen mit dem 1. Kapitel die Einleitung bildet, ist methodologischer Natur. Der Leser wird mit den Begriffen Intratextualität, Kontextualität und Intertextualität vertraut gemacht. Die Intertextualität oder innerbiblische Interpretation wird erstaunlicherweise als eine Errungenschaft der letzten Jahre vorgestellt (45-49). Von den genannten methodischen Ansätzen unterscheidet der Verfasser noch die Infratextualität. Gemeint ist nicht etwa die vom Verfasser übrigens sehr beachtete Diachronie; die Komponente "infra" will vielmehr hinweisen auf das unter der Textoberfläche liegende und den Text bestimmende Konzept. Die methodologische Wegweisung dieses 2. Kapitels macht noch darauf aufmerksam, daß bewußt davon abgesehen wird, zu den klassischen Fragen der Literarkritik Stellung zu beziehen, und daß die Untersuchung sich auf Abschnitte beschränkt, die für die Beurteilung des Verhältnisses von Universalismus und Partikularismus von besonderer Bedeutung sind, nämlich Jes 42,1-13; 44,24-45,8; 49,22-26 und 51,1-8.

Diese Abschnitte werden im 3. bis 6. Kapitel, dem Hauptteil der Untersuchung, eingehend behandelt. In Jes 42,1-13 (55-101; 227-238) wird vor allem eine Vieldeutigkeit des Jahweknechts herausgestellt. Doppeldeutigkeit glaubt der Verfasser auch aufzeigen zu können bei צֶעַק und נִשָּׂא (קִרָּא) in 42,2, bei dem geknickten Rohr und dem glimmenden Docht in 42,3, bei עַם בְּרִיָּה in 42,6 (und 49,8) sowie bei den Blinden und Gefangenen in 42,7. Das Verhältnis Israels zur Völkerwelt ist in Jes 42,1-13 relativ spannungsfrei. In dem Abschnitt Jes 44,24-45,8 (103-147; 238-246) stellt der Verfasser dagegen ideologische Spannung fest, da die Verherrlichung des Kyrus, der Hirt und Gesalbter Gottes genannt wird, zwar auf die Rettung Israels abzielt, aber seiner Meinung nach doch antidavidische Einstellung verrät. In dem

Textstück Jes 49,22-26 (149-172; 246-248) tritt die Spannung zwischen Universalismus und Partikularismus stark hervor, insofern die Völker als Sklaven des heimkehrenden Israel erscheinen. In Jes 51,1-8 (173-201; 248-251) wird die Völkerwelt deutlich in Gottes Heilsplan einbezogen, wenngleich in einer gewissen Spannung zur Auserwählung Israels. In einem abschließenden 7. Kapitel (205-216; 251-252), das den dritten Teil des Werkes bildet, werden die Befunde evaluiert. In fünf Appendices (253-262) werden noch Tabellen zu bestimmten Fragen nachgeliefert. Die Bibliographie (263-276) ist reichhaltig, wird aber verständlicherweise nur selektiv herangezogen.

Das gelehrte Werk, das man in den Einzelheiten mit Nutzen konsultiert, ruft nach einer Stellungnahme zu bestimmten Grundauffassungen. Der Rezensent vermißt, gerade auch im Hinblick auf das Verhältnis von Universalismus und Partikularismus, eine deutliche Situierung der Texte. Sodann stellt sich ihm die Frage nach der literarischen Einheitlichkeit der Texte. Nicht einverstanden ist er vor allem noch mit der Art und Weise, wie der Verfasser das Verhältnis von Diachronie und Synchronie beurteilt.

Das Verhältnis von Universalismus und Partikularismus nimmt im vorliegenden Werk einen zentralen Platz ein. Dazu kann man den Verfasser nur beglückwünschen. Es geht ja um den unfafßbaren Anspruch eines kleinen Volkes, das auserwählte Volk des wahren und einzigen Gottes zu sein. Das ist nur erträglich, wenn eine universale Heilssendung damit verbunden ist. Tatsächlich war sich das (nachexilische) Judentum in zunehmendem Maße dieser Sendung bewußt. Man hat schließlich sogar regelrecht missioniert (vgl. Mt 23,15; Röm 2,17-23), was übrigens dem modernen Judentum im Gegensatz zu Kirche und Islam auffallend abgeht. Wäre es nun bei einem solchen Thema nicht angebracht gewesen, ein Gesamtbild der nachexilischen Entwicklung wenigstens in Umrissen zu zeichnen? Man wartet zum Beispiel - sogar innerhalb des Jesajabuches - vergeblich auf die erstaunliche Stelle Jes 19,25. Auch Jes 2,2-5 und 56,3-8 spielen kaum eine Rolle. Im Rahmen des Gesamtbildes hätte der Verfasser dann die von ihm behandelten Texte situieren sollen, damit die mikroskopischen Untersuchungen nicht in der Luft hängen. Leider hält er die Situierung, besonders die chronologische, nicht für seine Aufgabe. Die Texte dürften m.E. in erheblichem Abstand von den Ereignissen um Kyrus entstanden sein. Eine universale Heilsbotschaft ist in einem solchem Zeitraum nicht verwunderlich.

Für die besagte Situierung der Texte mit dem Blick auf das universale Sendungsbewußtsein Israels sind unter anderem bestimmte semantische Sachverhalte von Bedeutung. Der Terminus תורה wird in Jes 42,4 und 51,4 wie auch in Jes 2,3; 42,21.24 und 51,7 das mosaische Gesetz in Form des abgeschlossenen Pentateuchs bezeichnen. Man wähnt sich fast in der Nähe von Weish 18,4, wo es heißt, daß durch Israel der Welt das unvergängliche Licht des Gesetzes gegeben werden sollte. Nach Jes 42,6 und 49,6 ist Israel ein Licht für die Völker, und zwar durch das Gesetz, das seinerseits in Jes 51,4 ein Licht für die Völker genannt wird. Der Verfasser setzt jedoch für תורה an den erwähnten Stellen die allgemeine Bedeutung "instruction" voraus. Außer תורה dürfte auch משפט in Jes 42,1.3.4 und 51,4 das mosaische Gesetz vor Augen haben; in Jes 42,4 und 51,4 stehen die beiden Termini denn



auch parallel. Die Lexikographie hat seit jeher für משפט die Möglichkeit der Bedeutung "Rechtssatzung, Gesetz" registriert. Daß im weiteren Kontext der genannten Stellen משפט auch in den Bedeutungen "Gerichtsverfahren", "rechtes Urteil" oder "Gerechtigkeit" vorkommt, ist unbedenklich. Das Hebräische nimmt nicht einmal Anstoß daran, daß stark voneinander abweichende semantische Ausprägungen desselben Terminus im selben Satz vorkommen. Man vergleiche zum Beispiel die beiden gleichermaßen geläufigen, aber inhaltlich verschiedenen Ausprägungen von צדקה in Jes 56,1. Nun versteht der Verfasser wie schon תורה so auch משפט an den genannten Stellen nicht vom mosaischen Gesetz und übersetzt mit "justice". Er erwähnt nicht einmal die Möglichkeit, daß das mosaische Gesetz gemeint sein könnte, obwohl wir uns auf dem Boden der von ihm behandelten Abschnitte Jes 42,1-13 und 51,1-8 befinden. Die Auswirkungen auf die Beurteilung des Heilsuniversalismus sowie der Entstehungszeit der Texte liegen auf der Hand. Im übrigen gibt es manche inhaltliche Anhaltspunkte dafür, daß Jes 40-66 auf den abgeschlossenen Pentateuch zurückblickt.

Mit Bezug auf die Frage nach der Einheitlichkeit der Texte bietet der Verfasser nicht wenige Beobachtungen, die für eine irgendwie geartete Einheitlichkeit in den verschiedenen Bereichen des Jesajabuches sprechen. Er zeigt sich offen für gesamtjesajanische Gemeinsamkeiten (vgl. etwa 142-145) und hält sogar Einteilungen, die von den üblichen abweichen, für diskutabel. Dies alles darf jedoch nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, daß schon allein die unentwegte Suche nach Vieldeutigkeit es dem Verfasser verwehrt, sich zu einer wirklichen Einheitlichkeit zu bekennen, und sei auch nur im Bereich der von ihm untersuchten Abschnitte. Er zeigt sich der nunmehr traditionellen Forschungsmeinung zugetan, daß es einen gegen Ende des Exils auftretenden, merkwürdigerweise anonym gebliebenen Propheten ("Deuterjesaja") gegeben hat, von dem eine "Tradition" ausgegangen ist. Eine solche Tradition führt dann zu "ambiguity, tension and multiplicity". So spricht der Verfasser oft von "(redactional) stages", "levels", "layers", "shifts", "diachronic strata", "double entendre", "multiple settings", "diverse ideologies". Da die Forschungsmeinungen in der fundamentalen Frage nach Entstehung und Einheitlichkeit von Jes 40-55 bzw. 40-66 hoffnungslos auseinandergehen, sei dem Rezensenten das Bekenntnis gestattet, daß er Jes 40-66 und erst recht den Kontext der vom Verfasser behandelten Abschnitte für ein einheitliches Stück Redaktion des Jesajabuches hält. Einen kontinuierlich interpretierenden prophetischen Traditionsfluß hält er allgemein und insbesondere beim Jesajabuch für ein Phantom, eine zwar verständliche, aber auf historisch-kritischer Ebene abzulehnende Mystifizierung banaler Sachverhalte. Es gibt nur echte Jesajaworte und eine einmalige Redaktion des Jesajabuches. Die Redaktion gibt den Worten Jesajas eine neue Ausrichtung im Sinne der Heilsverkündigung und steuert überall eigenes Material bei, ganz massiv in Jes 40-66, immer im Rückblick auf die hochstilisierte Exilskatastrophe.

Die Vielfältigkeit, die der Verfasser festzustellen glaubt, scheitert nicht nur an der Einheitlichkeit, sie unterliegt auch grundsätzlichen hermeneutischen Bedenken. Dies sei am Beispiel des Jahweknechts deutlich gemacht (vgl. 73-88). Der Jahweknecht ist ohne Zweifel, wie der Verfasser



für die synchrone Ebene gelegentlich selbst zugibt, mit Israel gleichzusetzen. Die Forschung der letzten Jahrzehnte kehrt zunehmend zu dieser Einsicht zurück. Wenn nun der Knecht Züge von wem auch immer trägt, z.B. prophetische eines Mose, Jesaja oder Jeremia sowie königlich-davidische, so ändert dies absolut nichts an der Identität. Der Knecht ist selbst dann noch ausschließlich mit Israel zu identifizieren, wenn die einschlägigen Texte, wie der Verfasser mit vielen anderen irrtümlicherweise meint, ein literarisches Dasein mit anderer Sinnggebung gehabt haben sollten, bevor sie in den vorliegenden Textverband aufgenommen wurden. Es ist nach den Gesetzen der Literaturwissenschaft nicht statthaft dann von Vieldeutigkeit zu sprechen; maßgebend ist die synchrone Ebene. Die Diachronie steht für den Ausleger *veri nominis* völlig unter der Herrschaft der Synchronie. Man bedenke, daß zum Beispiel die Endredaktion des Pentateuchs nicht daran interessiert ist, daß der Leser die Quellen unterscheidet; die älteren Quellen wird sie selbst nicht gekannt haben. Zum Verhältnis von Synchronie und Diachronie sei verwiesen auf J. Becker, *Grundzüge einer Hermeneutik des Alten Testaments* (Frankfurt am Main 1993), 26-37.

Auf einen weiteren sehr bedeutsamen Fall vermeintlicher Spannung soll noch eingegangen werden. In der Tatsache, daß Kyrus als Gottes "Hirt" und "Gesalbter" vorgestellt wird (Jes 44,28 bzw. 45,1), sieht der Verfasser einen Konflikt der Traditionen, einen Hinweis auf antidavidische Ideologie in der Exilsgemeinde (146). (Den Titel "a wrighteous one" dürfen wir Kyrus jedoch nicht zuerkennen. Der Verfasser gibt צדק in Jes 41,2 ohne weitere Erklärung an nicht weniger als sechs Stellen so wieder. Er findet sogar ein Echo in der schwierigen Lesart צדיק in Jes 49,24 [vgl. 163-166]). Von einem echten Konflikt kann jedoch keine Rede sein. Einerseits lebt die David-Tradition in exilisch-nachexilischer Zeit als reale dynastische Erwartung fort. Andererseits erscheint das davidische Königtum in rein theokratisch denkenden Schriften, die keinen irdischen König vorsehen, in veränderter Form; es wird kollektivierend auf das Volk übertragen. Dies ist keine Ablehnung sondern eine Sublimierung der David-Tradition. Die Heilserwartung kann dabei in phantastischen Höhen schweben, so daß ein Fremdherrscher als zeitweiliger irdischer Sachwalter Jahwes kein Problem darstellt. Kollektivierende Übertragung des davidischen Königtums auf Israel findet sich im Jesajabuch durch redaktionelle Neuinterpretation in Jes 4,2; 7,14-16; 8,8; 8,23-9,6 und 11,1-10. Die Stelle Jes 55,3 liegt auf dieser Linie; auch der Jahweknecht ist in diesem Zusammenhang zu nennen. Außerhalb des Jesajabuches kommen vor allem die Königspsalmen in Betracht, ja sogar Mi 5,1-5 und Sach 9,9-10. Zu den schwierigen, aber von manchen wenigstens teilweise bereits anerkannten Sachverhalten vgl. J. Becker, *Isaias – der Prophet und sein Buch* (SBS 30; Stuttgart 1968) 44-62; ferner: *Messiaserwartung im Alten Testament* (SBS 83; Stuttgart 1977) 63-73, englisch: *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia 1980) 68-78; "Die kollektive Deutung der Königspsalmen", *TP* 52 (1977) 561-578, auch in *Studien zum Messiasbild im Alten Testament* (ed. U. Struppe) (SBA 6; Stuttgart 1989) 291-318.

Allgemein gilt: Wenn wir nicht sicher ermitteln können, was der biblische Text meint, sollten wir keinen doppelten Sinn unterstellen. So zum Beispiel bei צעק und נשא in Jes 42,2 (vgl. 64-66) oder bei ברית עם in Jes 42,6 und 49,8 (vgl. 88-97). Bei ברית עם muß man sich entweder für das Volk Israel

oder für die Erdbevölkerung entscheiden. Für die zweite Möglichkeit sprechen die Stellen Jes 40,7; 42,5 (unmittelbar vor 42,6!) und 44,7 sowie der kollektive Singular von נָא in Jes 49,7 und 55,5. Der biblische Autor wußte, was er sagte. Gewundert hätte er sich allerdings über die Strukturbilder, die sein Text enthalten soll. Das großräumige chiasmische Strukturbild von Jes 40–55 (vgl. 262) sowie das von Jes 44,24–45,8 (vgl. 115–118) und Jes 51,4–7 (vgl. 177) beurteilt der Verfasser selbst recht zurückhaltend. Gegen die Annahme wirklicher inhaltlicher Gegensätze ist man einigermaßen gefeit, wenn man die enorme Flexibilität im Bereich von Jes 40–50 bedenkt, wo der biblische Autor Sprecher und Sprechrichtung ständig wechseln läßt. Er hielt es auf gut semitische Art auch nicht für nötig, uns bei harter Rede gegen Fremdvölker einerseits und universaler Heilsankündigung andererseits ausgleichenden Kommentar zu verabreichen. Es war ihm selbstverständlich, daß das Heil der Heiden der größeren Ehre Israels dient und beides der Verherrlichung des Gottes Israels. Da er voraussetzt, daß man den größeren Zusammenhang liest, kann er den Jahweknecht und Kyrus abrupt einführen, ohne Kyrus vorerst beim Namen zu nennen. Er rechnet ohnehin damit, daß seine Leser auf Anhieb wissen, um wen es sich handelt. Schließlich ist noch zu fragen, ob nicht die apokalyptisierende Verfasserfiktion eine gewisse Geheimsinnigkeit hervorbringt. Der in nachexilischer Zeit schreibende Redaktor scheint ex persona Isaiae in die ihrem Ende entgegengehende Exilszeit hinein sprechen zu wollen.

Da die Bibliographie mit Bezug auf das Thema Universalismus eine gewisse Vollständigkeit anstrebt, sei auf folgende Beiträge aufmerksam gemacht: P. Altmann, *Erwählungstheologie und Universalismus im Alten Testament* (BZAW 92; Berlin 1964) und H. Leene, "Universalisme or Nationalisme? Isaiah XLV 9-13 and its Context", *Bijdragen* 35 (1974) 309–334.

An "Deuterojesaja" werden sich weiterhin die Geister scheiden. Das Werk des Verfassers wird die Auseinandersetzung beleben.

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Alphonso GROENEWALD, *Psalms 69: Its Structure, Redaction and Composition* (Altes Testament und Moderne 18). Münster, LIT Verlag, 2003, xiv-388 p. 16 × 23. €24,90.

Diese Psalm 69 gewidmete Monographie ist die überarbeitete Fassung einer Dissertation, die an der Katholischen Universität Nimwegen (Niederlande) unter der Leitung von Ulrich Berges entstand und im Jahr 2003 zur Begutachtung vorgelegt wurde. Sie ist von folgender Ausgangsfrage geleitet (vgl. 4, 193): Die formgeschichtlich orientierte Psalmeninterpretation sieht Ps 69 als Klagelied eines Einzelnen an. Doch wie läßt sich erklären, daß Ps 69 im Gegensatz zu den anderen individuellen Klageliedern nicht ungefähr 10–20 Verse lang ist, sondern diese Psalmen beinahe um das Doppelte ihrer

Länge übertrifft? Noch eine andere Beobachtung steht am Anfang der Untersuchung: Schon eine oberflächliche Lektüre des Textes legt die Vermutung nahe, daß die verschiedenen in Ps 69 angesprochenen Themen sich schwerlich zu einem homogenen Ganzen zusammenfügen lassen. So kennen etwa die Elemente der Klage, die in V. 2-5 und in V. 9-13 enthalten sind, keine nennenswerten Gemeinsamkeiten. Dazu kommt, daß die letzten Verse des Psalms auf Themen anspielen, die durch den vorhergehenden Text kaum vorbereitet sind, z.B. wenn V. 36 vom Zion sowie vom Aufbau der Städte Judas handelt. Wie lassen sich solche Elemente in einen individuellen Klagepsalm integrieren? Kann man sie nur als "Fremdkörper" ansehen, die nicht in ihren Kontext passen? Wie kann man schließlich das Nebeneinander von offensichtlich heterogenen Elementen innerhalb von Ps 69 erklären, ob man nun die formgeschichtliche Methode befürwortet oder nicht?

Diese Fragen führen ins Zentrum von Groenewalds Überlegungen. Mit der Forschungslage zu Ps 69 bestens vertraut, unterscheidet er von vornherein zwischen drei Problemkomplexen (2-6), mit denen die Monographie sich befassen muß: 1. die textkritischen Probleme, 2. die Struktur des Textes, 3. die Einheitlichkeit oder Uneinheitlichkeit des Psalms. Dem entsprechen die drei zentralen Kapitel der Arbeit: "Text Demarcation and Text-Critical Analysis" (15-35), "The Structure and Meaning of Psalm 69" (36-175), "Redaction and Composition Criticism" (176-290). Diese drei Kapitel werden gerahmt von einem Einleitungskapitel "Introduction and Methodology" (1-14) sowie von einem Schlußkapitel "Concluding Remarks" (291-307), das die zuvor gewonnenen Ergebnisse ausführlich und übersichtlich zusammenfaßt. Eine Bibliographie sowie ein Bibelstellenregister schließen die Arbeit ab. Dazu kommen zwei Addenda: "Minor text-critical problems" (354-371) sowie "Text and translation" (372-374), wo der hebräische Text mit einer parallelen englischen Arbeitsübersetzung geboten wird.

Was die methodische Orientierung der Arbeit angeht, fallen vor allem zwei Aspekte ins Auge: 1. Im Gegensatz zu einer lange üblichen Praxis — nicht nur in der Psalmenexegese — entscheidet Groenewald sich dafür, einzig und allein den Masoretentext (MT), wie er in der BHS enthalten ist, als maßgebliche Textgrundlage zu wählen (16-19). Er verzichtet damit nicht nur auf freie Konjekturen, sondern auch auf die Berücksichtigung von Lesarten, die das Qumranfragment 4QPs<sup>a</sup>, die antiken Bibelübersetzungen, die Targume usw. enthalten. Das bedeutet, daß er den MT an keiner Stelle unter Berufung auf solche Textüberlieferungen verändert oder verbessert. 2. Schon im Einleitungskapitel enthält Groenewald dem Leser nicht vor, daß er von folgender Arbeitshypothese ausgeht: "The present unit of Psalm 69 is regarded as a literary unit, but a unit which is the result of a redactional-compositional process; that is to say, the text is the product of a gradual and multi-stage process which took place over an extended period during which an older portion was occasionally expanded and newly accentuated" (10). Allerdings geht es Groenewald nicht in erster Linie darum, die Existenz verschiedener redaktioneller Schichten in Ps 69 — gleichsam textimmanent — nachzuweisen. Vielmehr überschreitet er in dreierlei Hinsicht die Textgrenzen von Ps 69 (vgl. 10-14), indem er versucht, erstens die redaktionellen Schichten mit Parallelstellen im *corpus propheticum* und im *corpus psalmorum* in Verbindung zu bringen, zweitens die späten

redaktionellen Schichten — soweit dies möglich ist — in die Entstehungsgeschichte des Psalters einzuordnen und schließlich drittens die historischen Umstände zu bestimmen, die sich in den späten redaktionellen Zusätzen — er verwendet immer wieder den Ausdruck “Fortschreibungen” — widerspiegeln. Mit dieser methodischen Entscheidung bewegt sich Groenewald im Fahrwasser einer Richtung der Psalmenexegese, die zwei Fragestellungen miteinander verbindet: die kanonische Exegese sowie die Kompositionsgeschichte des Psalters als Buch (vgl. dazu E. Zenger, “Psalmen im Psalter: Neue Perspektiven der Forschung”, *Theologische Revue* 95 [1999] 443-456).

Bevor Groenewald dieses Programm in Angriff nimmt, geht er kurz auf die textkritischen Fragen ein. Bei der Auswahl der zu behandelnden Stellen orientiert er sich im wesentlichen am Apparat der BHS. Obwohl er grundsätzlich für den MT optiert — an dessen Verständlichkeit er festhält, selbst im Fall von schwierigen Wörtern oder Passagen (z.B. V. 11a.23b) —, behandelt er ausführlich eine Anzahl von Varianten, die das Fragment 4QPs<sup>a</sup> sowie die antiken Übersetzungen überliefern. In jedem Fall ist das Ergebnis eindeutig: Keine dieser Varianten kann zu einer Änderung der Textgrundlage, d.h. des MT, Anlaß geben. Wenn man auch Groenewalds grundsätzlicher Option für den MT zustimmt und seinen Argumenten folgt, mit denen er die Verständlichkeit und Zuverlässigkeit des MT im Detail begründet, so wird man doch einzelne Aussagen über die antiken Versionen nicht ohne weiteres teilen können. So ist meiner Ansicht nach immer wieder damit zu rechnen, daß die LXX, vielleicht auch die Peschitta *interpretierend übersetzen*, z.B. wenn die Peschitta in Ps 69,5b nicht מַצְמִית “meine Verderber” (= MT) übersetzt, sondern מַעֲצִמִית “als meine Knochen”, was eine Parallele zu מַעֲשִׂית “als meine Haare” in Ps 69,5a bildet. Die Peschitta scheint hier einen nicht leicht verständlichen hebräischen Text anders wiederzugeben, indem sie den Parallelismus noch verstärkt. Dieses Phänomen läßt sich häufiger auf dem Gebiet der biblischen Literatur beobachten (vgl. Ps 25,4-6<sup>LXX</sup> und Ps 26,4-6<sup>MT</sup>; vgl. neuerdings auch G. Tauberschmidt, *Secondary Parallelism. A Study of Translation Technique in LXX Proverbs* (Atlanta, GA 2004). Im Fall von Ps 69,5ab die Peschitta-Lesart als *lectio faciliior* und die des MT als *lectio difficilior* zu bezeichnen (19), ist wenig hilfreich, da die Peschitta wohl keine echte Variante zum MT darstellt, sondern ihre hebräische Vorlage neuinterpretiert. *Mutatis mutandis* gilt dies auch für zwei LXX-Übersetzungen (vgl. 20-21, 28): für die Wiedergabe von לָב durch ψυχή in Ps 68,21<sup>LXX</sup> (dasselbe Phänomen noch in V. 33) sowie für den Gebrauch des Verbs συγκατατίω in Ps 68,11.24<sup>LXX</sup> (im MT stehen zwei verschiedene Verben).

Aber die Textkritik steht nicht im Vordergrund von Groenewalds Dissertation. Viel wichtiger ist der zweite große Teil der Arbeit, der sich mit dem Aufbau und der Bedeutung von Ps 69 beschäftigt, und zwar noch ohne die Einheitlichkeit des Textes in Frage zu stellen (vgl. 11). Der Schwerpunkt der ausführlichen Analysen liegt auf Fragen der Syntax und der Wortsemantik sowie auf der Strukturanalyse. Ohne die zahlreichen Details hier referieren zu können, sei festgehalten, daß Groenewald den Psalm in fünf Abschnitte (jeweils “stanza” genannt) gliedert: V. 2a-4d (“Complaint I”), V. 6a-14a (“Complaint II”), V. 14b(ab אֶלֶהּ)-19b (“Petition I”), V. 20a-30b (“Petition II”), V. 31a-37b (“Praise and confidence”). Unterbrochen werden die Analysen durch mehrere Exkurse, die einzelne Wörter und Begriffe

behandeln (z.B. Exkurs 4 zu ספר חיים V. 29) oder den Forschungsstand zu inhaltlichen Fragen zusammenfassen (z.B. Exkurs 3 zu den Theorien zum Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang). Insgesamt gesehen, zeugen Groenewalds Analysen von einer großen Vertrautheit mit der exegetischen Debatte. Dennoch bleiben Fragen offen. Mir ist beispielsweise nicht klar geworden, warum der dritte Abschnitt nicht schon mit וַאֲנִי in V. 14a beginnt, sondern erst mit אֶלֶּהֶם in V. 14b (vgl. 70.75). Ist nicht die Zäsur zwischen V. 13 und V. 14, d.h. zwischen der Klage über die Feinde und dem Gebet zu Gott wesentlich deutlicher als die Zäsur zwischen V. 14a und V. 14b? Andere Fragen betreffen die Übersetzung. Warum kann man V. 11a mit “And even when I weep [Hervorhebung E.B.]” übersetzen? Was bedeutet וַאֲנִי־שֹׁדָה in V. 21? Selbst wenn man in derartigen Fragen zur Zeit kaum Übereinstimmung erzielen kann, sollten sie — gerade in einer so ausführlichen Untersuchung — nicht übergangen werden.

Den wichtigsten Teil der Arbeit wird man wohl im Kapitel “Redaction and Composition Criticism” erkennen. Zunächst stellt Groenewald den Forschungsstand vor und widmet dabei besondere Aufmerksamkeit den Autoren, die in Ps 69 mehrere redaktionelle Schichten erkennen (181-189). Ohne deren Argumente im einzelnen zu widerlegen, was eigentlich nötig gewesen wäre, begründet er in einem weiteren Schritt sein eigenes Modell der Entstehung des Textes (190-276). Die wichtigsten Ergebnisse des Kapitels seien hier kurz zusammengefaßt:

1. Der vorexilische Grundpsalm besteht aus V. 2-5.14b(ab אֶלֶּהֶם)-19.31. Er stellt ein Klagelied eines Einzelnen dar, der seine Not mit den Metaphern des Chaoswassers umschreibt (194-201). Warum der Text vorexilischen Ursprungs ist, wird nicht ausführlich begründet. Anscheinend wird vorausgesetzt, daß der Text schon ein gewisses Alter aufweisen muß, wenn er in nachexilischer Zeit mehrfach bearbeitet wird.

2. Der Grundpsalm erfährt in nachexilischer Zeit eine erste Fortschreibung, die V. 6-14a.20-30.34 umfaßt. Gerade die beiden Passagen V. 6-14a.20-30 weichen vom Grundpsalm ab, insofern als sie die Not des Sprechers nicht mehr mit den erwähnten Metaphern zur Sprache bringen, sondern — “with an almost biographical clarity” (205, n. 88) — mit einem konkreten Konflikt assoziieren, und zwar mit der nachexilischen Kontroverse (vgl. Hag 1,4-11), die den Wiederaufbau des Tempels begleitete (201-221). Zwar versucht Groenewald deutlich zu machen, wie die einzelnen Elemente dieser ersten redaktionellen Bearbeitung sich in den Grundpsalm einfügen. Doch bleibt eine wesentliche Frage zu beantworten: Welche lexikalischen Elemente oder welche inhaltlichen Aspekte des ersten Teils des Grundpsalms (V. 2-5) könnten einen Redaktor dazu geführt haben, V. 6-14a anzufügen? Die Behauptung, der Grundpsalm sei als “befitting a Fortschreibung” (208) angesehen worden, beweist als solche noch relativ wenig. So wie in dieser Hinsicht Groenewalds Argumentation nicht recht überzeugt, so fällt auch seine Diskussion mit den Befürwortern der Einheitlichkeit des Psalms merkwürdig knapp aus (177-180; nicht behandelt wird der immer noch lesenswerte Kommentar von J. Calès, *Le livre des Psaumes*, vol. 1 (Paris 1936). Denn auch diese Autoren sind letztlich mit der analogen Frage konfrontiert: Wie verhalten sich die verschiedenen Motive von V. 2-5 und V. 6-13 zueinander? Was verbindet sie trotz ihrer unbestreitbaren Unterschiede?

Es ist offenkundig, daß hier auch in Zukunft noch Bedarf an weiterer Forschung besteht.

3. Einer weiteren redaktionellen Bearbeitung aus nachexilischer Zeit ist der Abschnitt V. 35-36 zuzuschreiben (221-239). Diese Verse haben biblische Parallelen in Jes 40,9; 44,26, was Groenewald zu der Schlußfolgerung veranlaßt, in der zweiten Bearbeitung von Ps 69 einen Einfluß deuterocesajanischer Kreise zu erkennen. Insbesondere sieht er eine Verbindung zu den Leviten, die bisher wenig von der Rückkehr aus dem Exil profitiert haben und mit den Ereignissen, die sich in Babylon 482 v. Chr. abspielten, besondere Erwartungen verknüpften (235-238).

4. Die dritte Bearbeitung umfaßt V. 36c ("und sie werden dort wohnen und sie [gemeint ist wohl Juda] besitzen") sowie V. 37 (230-260). Auch dieser kurze Abschnitt hat seine Parallelen in der prophetischen Literatur, vor allem in Jes 65,9, und läßt sich auf dem Hintergrund sozialer Konflikte in der nachexilischen Gesellschaft erklären, die zu einer massiven Benachteiligung der Leviten führten. Es scheint, daß hinter den עֲבָדִים von V. 37 und denen im Tritojesajabuch dieselben — anscheinend levitischen — Kreise stehen. Groenewald datiert diese dritte Bearbeitungsschicht in die zweite Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.

5. Die letzte Spur einer redaktionellen Bearbeitung hat sich in einer "aktualisierenden Einschreibung" erhalten (so 261), und zwar in V. 32-33. Hinter diesen Versen sind wohl Kreise zu erkennen, die zu einer Relativierung der Schlachtopfer zugunsten der תִּדְרָה tendierten. Für Groenewald spiegelt sich hier eine Armentheologie wider, die Armut mit Frömmigkeit identifiziert und Distanz hält zum Tempelkult und zu seinen Opfern. Diese Redaktionsschicht stammt wohl aus der Zeit um 450-400 v. Chr. (275) und ist denselben Redaktoren zuzuschreiben, die Ps 69-72 zusammenstellten; diese Psalmen bilden ja das Ende des zweiten davidischen Psalmenbuchs. Die kultkritische Ergänzung hat somit die Aufgabe, eine Verbindung zu vergleichbaren Passagen in Ps 40,7-9; 50,14; 51,18-19 herzustellen, also zu Stellen, die an anderen "strategisch wichtigen Stellen" im ersten und zweiten Psalmenbuch stehen.

Abschließend bleibt festzuhalten, daß Groenewald eine klar gegliederte, verständlich geschriebene und gut informierte Monographie vorgelegt hat (nirgendwo wird allerdings der ausführliche Kommentar von L. Alonso Schökel – C. Carniti, *Salmos* [Estella 1994], zitiert). Er hat es verstanden, die verschiedenen methodischen Impulse, die er vor allem der Münsteraner Schule der Psalmenexegese verdankt, zu verarbeiten und eine Exegese von Ps 69 zu begründen, die mit Hilfe einer Anzahl von Hypothesen den Text in seiner unbestreitbaren Heterogenität zu erklären sucht. Inwiefern die einzelnen Hypothesen des Kapitels "Redaction and Composition Criticism" Zustimmung finden — gerade in einer Zeit, die keine einheitliche Methode in der Psalmenexegese kennt —, wird man abwarten müssen. In jedem Fall ist die Monographie als ein Plädoyer für einen sinnvollen und reflektierten Einsatz diachroner und synchroner Methoden in der Analyse komplexer Psalmen anzusehen.



Ludger SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER (übersetzt und ausgelegt von), *Kohelet* (Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament). Freiburg – Basel – Wien, Herder, 2004. 572 p. 17 × 24. € 85 – SFr 140.

In this commentary, Schwienhorst-Schönberger follows F.J. Backhaus in treating the book of Qoh as a four-part composition. According to Backhaus the four parts are quite independent from one another, whereas S. discovers between them a certain order that can be understood against the background of ancient rhetoric. The whole book has one topic, namely the question of what is human happiness and what are its necessary conditions. This topic is treated in accordance with the four parts of classical oratory: *propositio*, *explicatio*, *refutatio*, *applicatio*. Within the framework of its opening and concluding words, the structure of the book looks as follows:

- 1,1 Superscription
- 1,2 Motto (breath of air)
  - 1,3–3,22 Presentation (*propositio*): Meaning and necessary condition of human happiness
  - 4,1–6,9 Explication (*explicatio*): Discussion with a pre-philosophical understanding of happiness
  - 6,10–8,17 Defense (*refutatio*): Discussion with alternative definitions of happiness
  - 9,1–12,7 Application (*applicatio*): Exhortation to joy and to vigorous activity
- 12,8 Motto (breath of air)
- 12,9–14 Epilogues

In the first part (1,3–3,22) we find a philosophy of happiness. Qoheleth plays the part of a king who seeks to find happiness in magnificent enterprises, in an accumulation of knowledge and in a maximum of pleasure. But this experiment ends in exasperation and despair. In 2,24–26, he recognizes that happiness cannot be found without God. On this basis he tackles the major themes of time (3,1–9), God and eternity (3,10–15), and life in the face of death (3,16–22). Part two (4,1–6,9) concretizes these fundamental views, dealing with the problems of Qoh's time within the horizon of that eudemonology: viz. competition (4,1–6), the danger of solitude (4,4–12), fickleness of power (4,13–16), religion (4,17–5,6), kingship (5,7–8), and poverty and riches (5,9–6,9). In the third part (6,10–8,17), the normative knowledge of that time is subjected to a critical scrutiny. Here we find the strongest criticism of traditional wisdom. In part four, Qoh develops his exhortations to action, which find their conclusion in an exhortation to enjoyment and to remember God (9,7–10; 11,9–12,7).

This is one of the few commentaries, if not the only one, that consistently treats Qoh as a coherent whole, without appealing to far-fetched literary structures, such as N. Lohfink's "palindromische Gesamtstruktur" or A.G. Wright's verbal repetition and numerical patterns. It offers a careful analysis of the text, in its details as well as in the broader connections within



the book. S. opens his work with 26 pages of bibliography in small print (15-40), followed by an extensive introduction (41-134), in which he deals with the name of the book, its place in the canon, its structure, its genre and the forms of small units, its theme (happiness, breath of air, God, fear of God), its date and place of origin, the cultural context, the language, its reception (this means the textual types: Hebrew and versions), and the history of interpretation (Jewish and Christian). On all of these topics the introduction offers a rich body of information. The study of each pericope has the same components: bibliography, a translated text, remarks on text and translation, analysis (context, structure), a detailed explanation, and meaning (of the pericope as a whole). There are excursuses on the “myth of eternal return” (see Qoh 1,4-11), and on “enduring happiness” and “hedonism” (see 9,1-6.7-10).

With regard to cultural context, S. regards Jewish tradition as the primary point of departure. This means that in his exegesis, he cites innumerable biblical references, much more than one would find in any other commentary. His argument is that the author of the book knew the texts of this tradition. But since the book originated in the Hellenistic period, S. gives priority among foreign influences to Hellenistic tradition, though Egyptian and Babylonian influences should not be excluded. Throughout the exegetical corpus of this commentary, we find a mass of extensive quotations and analyses of Greek philosophy and literature, much more than is usual in present-day commentaries on Qoh. Another characteristic feature of this commentary is its theological approach. Most commentaries regard Qoh as a philosophical book and do not pay much attention to possible theological views or to broad biblical affinities. Also in Schwienhorst-Schönberger’s view, Qoh deals with philosophical problems, but he appears to give absolute priority to Qoh’s theological solution of the problem of happiness, a solution based on creation theology (*schöpfungstheologisch*). This commentary is theological from beginning to end, and one would not expect anything else in a “Theologischer Kommentar” on a relatively small book in which the noun **אלהים** occurs 40 times.

But I want to comment here a bit critically on the way this theology is built up throughout the whole commentary. In my opinion, there is too much speculation in this work. Thus God’s presence in Qoh is expanded in the form of implicit references to it. So, for instance, accepting the “divine passive” in such forms as **נעשה** (1,13) and **מעשה** (1,15). In 1,13 “zielt die angekündigte Untersuchung zwar zunächst auf das menschliche Tun, implizit aber thematisiert sie dieses Tun bereits im Horizont der Frage nach der Schöpfung” (192). In 2,3 too, S. finds “schöpfungstheologische Konnotationen”, since King Qoh acts with wisdom like God in creation (Prov 8,22-31). “Doch wenn König Kohelet in 2,10 die Freude als Anteil all seiner Mühe, seines besitzes erfährt, dann klingt hier bereits an, dass ihm mit der Freude etwas zuteil wird, das den Charakter einer Gabe in sich trägt” (214). But the text says **חלקי מכל עמלי**, “my portion from all my toil”, the toil is the source of his **שמחה**, “enjoyment”, and God is absent from the verse. Also the poem on “time” (3,1-8) is heavily overloaded with theological speculation, e.g. in the comment that “to kill / to heal” (v. 3) evoke God’s “Gerichts- und Heilshandeln”, and also in the conclusion on this pericope: “Im Gedicht

allerdings wird Gott noch nicht genannt, und doch ist er auch hier unausgesprochen da als der Ewige, aus dem alle Zeit fließt und von dem alle Zeit auf den Menschen zukommt" (259).

A few remarks on details. It is somewhat simplistic to state: "Es handelt sich bei der Windhauchaussage also nicht um eine universale, sondern um eine *anthropologische* Aussage" (84). *הַכֹּל הָבֵל* is a *universal* anthropological statement. Also the lower frequency of *הַבֵּל* in parts 3 and 4 (7 - 4) in comparison with parts 1 and 2 (9 - 9) does not prove a different nuance of the statement in 1,2 and 12,8 (92). According to S., in Qoh 1,13, the pronoun *הוּא* refers to what is done, and not to "search and explore what is done" (187). Both interpretations remain possible, but the arguments adduced by S. are not compelling. The fact that in the other instances in Qoh, the noun *עֵנִין* is never used in connection with wisdom activity does not mean that it is not used so here. And against the argument that Qoh never qualifies "searching and exploring" as an "unhappy business", I would argue that according to 3,11, God "has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out the work that God does from the beginning to the end", and that is a frustrating business. The translation of the difficult clause in 2,3, *וְלִבִּי נָהֵג בְּהִקְמָה וְלִאֲחוּז בְּסִכְלוֹת*, is original and interesting: "mein Verstand aber mit Weisheit die Führung behielt und die Torheit gefangen nahm" (205). That would mean that Qoh does not speak here of an experiment with folly but without folly, i.e. of enjoyment coupled with wisdom. Syntactically, however, this view is hard to defend. After the interruption caused by the circumstantial clause *וְלִבִּי נָהֵג בְּהִקְמָה*, the infinitival clause *וְלִאֲחוּז בְּסִכְלוֹת* is on the same level as *לְמַשׁוֹךְ בֵּין אֶחָדָם*, both infinitives depending on *וְלִבִּי תִרְתִּי בְּלִבִּי* with a gerundial function. The two parallel infinitival phrases can also have a related meaning: cheering the body with wine is here characterized as folly, but even this folly is seized as a means to find an answer to the question of "what is good for the children of men, that they should/can do under heaven during the numbered days of their life". I am not convinced that in 1,15, *וְיִתְרוֹ* means "vorteilhaft", resuming ironically *יִתְרוֹן*, "Vorteil, profit" (1,3); I think the traditional translation, "why have I been so very wise?", is preferable. S. gives a theological meaning to the *hebel*-saying in 2,26: "König Kohelet hatte die Sinnlosigkeit eines Verhaltens erfahren, das sich im Erhalt eines selbst gemachten Glücks verzehrt, aber nicht mehr in den Genuss der Gaben und die Erfahrung des Gebers dieser Gaben kommt" (242). In my opinion, in the vss. 2,19.21.23.26, the *hebel* always refers to the disparity between toil and result. I am surprised that S. does not take issue with the different interpretations that have been suggested in exegetical literature on the difficult clause in 3,11: "he gave *הָעֵלָם* in their heart" (268). Also the enigmatic 3,15b is treated rather superficially, although the conclusion is profound: "Nur Gott kann das, dem man nachjagt, suchen", i.e. "Was für den Menschen in Vergangenheit und Zukunft auseinanderfällt (v. 15a), wird von Gott umgriffen (v. 15b)" (275). A better rendering of *נִרְדָּף* is "the same" (cf. Arabic *murâdîf* or *mutarâdîf* and Hebrew *נִרְדָּף*, "synonym"): God recalls or brings back the same (things).

My chief problem with this commentary is the theological weight S. gives to "joy" in Qoh. In my opinion, the meaning of 5,19 is misunderstood: enjoyment is not a divine revelation. The verse concludes a call to enjoyment: "For then he will not much remember, [i.e. "call to mind"] the days of his

life, because God keeps him occupied with his heart's pleasure". In other words, God, who imposes on man much hard labour, here gives him the task of enjoying pleasure, in order that he may have less time to call to mind his days. Qoheleth praises pleasure for keeping one's mind off the brevity of life or its frustrations. This, of course, means that enjoyment is meant as an antidote or an anodyne and that with "the days of his life" are meant the bad days. With enjoyment, God allows man a great gift: oblivion. Qoh puts each of his recommendations to enjoy the pleasures of life after having recorded an absurdity "under the sun": that the same fate of death is awaiting the wise as well as the fools and even that man and animal are equal in death; that God puts an idea of "eternity" in the human mind without man being able ever to fathom that fully; that somebody can be rich but be finally denied the possibility to enjoy his or her wealth; that reward and penalty are unjustly distributed in this life, and that, irrespective of their ethical behaviour, all must die. In the end, death is the fundamental absurdity: man only lives the time of a breath (*hebel*), even if we can speak of a long life; thereafter nothing remains but the lasting emptiness of death. Thus, life comes to nothing, and the thought of that should incite people to enjoy the good things of this life. Indeed, he recommends *carpe diem*. It is a book in which enjoyment or pleasure plays an important part, when it boils down to leading a livable life. Thus pleasure is a good thing of which a person receives his or her share, but this enjoyment is not able either to cancel out the absurdities of human life or even make them transparent. The exhortation to enjoy pleasure is the practical counterbalance of a philosophy which describes absurdities everywhere in the world and is aware that the world, and man who lives in it, ultimately are unfathomable, because they are the unfathomable work of an unfathomable God.

In spite of my objections, some of which are rather fundamental, I still am full of admiration for this marvelous piece of work. Whoever reads it will learn much and will have to take serious account of it.

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Antoon SCHOORS

Sebastian GRÄTZ, *Das Edikt des Artaxerxes*. Eine Untersuchung zum religionspolitischen und historischen Umfeld von Esra 7,12-26 (BZAW 337). Berlin-New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2004. ix-343 p. 16 × 23,5

This is a slightly revised version of the author's Habilitationsschrift, which was accepted by the evangelical faculty of the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Bonn in 2002/2003.

Grätz concludes that the sequence of passages in 1 Esdras, except for the parallels to 2 Chronicles 35-36 and the story of the three pages, is more original than Ezra MT and Nehemiah 8. He notes that a diarchic form of government exists in Ezra 1-6, with Zerubbabel and Joshua serving side by

side, but that no governmental figure stands alongside Ezra in Ezra 7–10. While the Levites play only an incidental role in Ezra 1–6, they have a major role in instructing the people in Nehemiah 8. Hence, Grätz concludes that Ezra 7–10 and Nehemiah 8 were composed in reaction to Ezra 1–6. The separate approaches to mixed marriages in Ezra 9–10 and Nehemiah 13 show that these chapters too belong to distinct traditions, and Nehemiah 1–6, 12–13 were linked secondarily to Ezra 1–10 and Nehemiah 8, probably in Maccabean times.

Grätz engages in a detailed philological study of the decree of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7,12–26. He finds allusions in it to other biblical passages, as well as connections with the context of the Ezra story. The Ezra figure picks up motifs from the traditions about Moses, Josiah, and Jehoshaphat, while the generosity of Artaxerxes toward the cult echoes the contributions of David to the temple in 1 Chronicles 22 and 29. The Ezra story and the edict of Artaxerxes pick up many theologoumena and motifs from deuteronomic/deuteronomistic sources, the Holiness Code, the priestly document, and Ezra 1–6. His search for a parallel form begins with the trilingual stele from Letoon, but he concludes, against Peter Frei, that this document did not give Persian authorization to local laws and it does not provide an appropriate analogy for the authorization of the Pentateuch. The letter or decree of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7 can be classified with the donations to cults associated with Hellenistic kings and has been projected back into the Persian period. He finds an analogy to this document in the letter of Antiochus III to the city and temple in Jerusalem that is preserved in Josephus and believes that the letter of Darius to Tattenai in Ezra 6,6–12 is also of the same genre. On the basis of this form critical and sociological analysis he concludes that the decree of Artaxerxes is not a historical document from the mid fifth century, but rather was composed in early Ptolemaic times, a century and a half later.

Yehud in his view was a semi-autonomous province in Persian times, and the Persians themselves were reluctant to interfere in local cultic affairs. He notes the evidence for Jewish governors of Yehud that has been derived from bullae and coins and believes that the province of Yehud had its own administration from the time of Cyrus and not just from the time of Artaxerxes. The high priests even had the right to mint coins in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Yehud's territory covered only 1900 square kilometers, and its population, following Charles Carter, was 13,350 before 450 and only 20,560 thereafter. The Elephantine papyri in his judgment reflect this decentralized form of Persian administration. Grätz comes to similar conclusions about Persian policies (a stress on continuity with previous tradition and a reluctance to interfere with the politics of religion) after study of the letter of Gadatas, which he admits is surely later than the time of Darius I that is claimed in the document. He questions whether a document from Ephesus, that Heltzer has claimed as a parallel to the decree of Artaxerxes, really stems from Persian times, and even if it did, he does not believe that the Persian authorities participated in bringing about the death sentence in this document. While Ezra 1–6 defines membership in the community according to the list of returnees in Ezra 1–6, the Ezra story points out how some people are disqualified from membership by their marital status. Later, Nehemiah shows concern that some members of the community can no longer speak the

Hebrew language. The purpose of the Ezra story is to put into effect and teach the law throughout the Trans-Euphrates territory, and not just in Yehud. From the perspective of Babylonian Judaism Yehud was part of the diaspora.

Dating the decree of Artaxerxes to Ptolemaic times is based on four criteria: the genre of royal donations to cults in Hellenistic times; David's lavish gifts to the temple in 1 Chronicles 29, which is also assigned to a Hellenistic context; the citation of "authentic" documents in the book of Ezra, which is common in Hellenistic historiography; and the lack of epigraphic parallels to the decree of Artaxerxes in Achaemenid times. The focus of the decree of Artaxerxes on the entire area west of the Euphrates probably reflects the inclusion of Yehud within the territory of Phoenicia and Syria that had been taken over by Ptolemy I in 305.

In the late nineteenth century Eduard Meyer argued that the decree of Artaxerxes in Ezra was historical but had been redacted by a Jewish functionary in the imperial service, perhaps by Ezra himself. Subsequent discussion has often concluded that the major provisions of the decree are congruent with Persian imperial policy toward local cults. Two recent statements set the parameters for the debate. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (OTL; Philadelphia 1988) states: "The mission of Ezra... is certainly historical. The purpose of the mission, as mandated in an imperial firman, was to restore the Jerusalem cultus and put the administration of the Jewish law on a firm basis... With or without editorial retouching, the decree was incorporated into Ezra's personal account of his tour of duty..." (147). Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, vol. 1: *Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah* (Library of Second Temple Studies 47; London 2004), who is highly skeptical about the Ezra traditions, concludes: "[The decree of Artaxerxes] is not the product of the Achaemenid age... It could be an outright invention, though there could have been an actual decree of Artaxerxes lying behind Ezra 7. If so, this decree has been worked over by Jewish scribes of a later age to produce the present text which in no way came from Artaxerxes... The view that an individual named Ezra existed and had something to do with the promulgation of a new lawbook is a perfectly reasonable one" (342-343). While Grabbe objects to the excessive powers and overwhelming sums of money given to Ezra in the decree, he retains the possibility of an historical Ezra who was involved with a lawbook.

Grätz concludes that the authorization of a specific Torah in Ezra 7,12-26 is fictive and Hellenistic. While he concedes that the Torah in some form may have arisen in Persian times, he denies any direct Persian influence on it. The authorization of indigenous, regional laws in Hellenistic times, however, is a documented royal act. The law of Moses/Ezra is given royal and therefore divine endorsement through the edict of Artaxerxes and then confirmed by the community in Nehemiah 8. This process shows similarities to the authorization of the Septuagint in the Letter of Aristeas.

Two questions make it difficult to accept the conclusions of Grätz without significant qualification. Are the parallels with royal Hellenistic donations close enough to preclude similar actions under Persian hegemony? And, more importantly, is Grätz correct in denying in general Persian support for or involvement with local cultic affairs? The Elephantine papyri, the

Udjahorresnet inscription, and the Letoon trilingual, while discussed by him and while falling far short of the powers and funds given to Ezra in the decree of Artaxerxes, do show Persian activity in the cultic area. To claim that Cambyses in his actions in Egypt was acting as an Egyptian Pharaoh and not as the Persian emperor seems to be desperation. But there is much to be learned from this book, and its evidence and arguments will be part of the discussion for years to come.

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### **Novum Testamentum**

Camille FOCANT, *L'évangile selon Marc* (Commentaire biblique: Nouveau Testament 2). Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 2004. 662 p. 15,5 × 23. €49

This recent major commentary on the Gospel of Mark by Camille Focant, professor of New Testament at the Catholic University of Louvain, appears in the series, *Commentaire biblique: Nouveau Testament*, a collection of scientific commentaries whose principal aim is to demonstrate the dynamics of the text taken as a whole. It begins with a substantial general and international bibliography listing commentaries and special studies on Mark (15-27). There are additional ample bibliographies for each pericope in the body of the commentary.

The introduction (29-49) begins with a discussion of the literary genre of Mark, concluding that the category of gospel narrative ("narration évangélique") better defines the genre of Mark than that of eschatological or apocalyptic history. That the John Mark mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles is the author of this gospel is seen as plausible though not provable. Since the Gospel of Mark makes no allusion to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by fire in 70, it is possible to date it approximately in the year of 69. Rome is proposed as the most probable place for the writing of Mark. It was meant, however, to be heard by a large audience of Gentile origin in the Roman empire rather than by a particular community. Mark is seen as the earliest gospel, independent of the other gospels.

After pointing out and illustrating that there is no consensus with regard to the literary structure of Mark, this commentary divides the gospel as follows: Prologue (1,1-13), first section (1,15-3,6), second section (3,7-6,6a), third section (6,6b-8,30), fourth section (8,31-10,52), fifth section (11,1-13,37), sixth section (14,1-16,8). These sections are further divided

into their respective smaller units, each of which is given a detailed exegetical treatment. Although 16,8 is understood to be the original conclusion of the gospel, an appendix discusses 16,9-20.

As literal a translation as possible is provided for each unit along with text critical notes. A bibliography for each unit is followed by an interpretation section, which provides an explanation, with Greek words transliterated, aimed at a broad audience—teachers and students of theology, priests, pastors, lay people with a theological formation, specialists of ancient literature. The commentary on each unit concludes with notes of a more technical nature, with Greek words not transliterated. These notes begin with a discussion of the entire unit from the viewpoint of its origin, tradition history, redaction, and literary genre, before proceeding to a focus on technical aspects of the individual verses complementing their treatment in the interpretation section.

Although historical-critical issues are discussed in the notes for each unit, the main methodological approach of this commentary is narrative-critical. It is more concerned with the narrated story world than with the world of history as such. It respects the integrity and autonomy of the Markan narrative, not using information found in the other gospels to clarify Mark's particular presentation of the story of Jesus. Social, cultural, and theological information of the first century is utilized to better understand the Markan narrative. Extratextual elements from the historical context of the author and first readers are taken into account, but as much as possible intratextual elements are favored. The commentary attempts to respect the surprises and suspense involved in the first reading of the narrative, but does not neglect clarifications resulting from rereadings of the text. Indeed, the abrupt ending of the narrative seems to demand such rereadings.

In this reviewer's opinion this narrative-critical commentary of Mark is generally successful in demonstrating the narrative dynamics of the text, offering a wealth of exegetical observations and insights that help us to better understand this gospel and its narrative dynamics. Just to mention a few of those numerous insights, particularly well-done and enlightening is the treatment of the final unit of the gospel with its enigmatic and abrupt ending. The commentary demonstrates how a narrative-critical approach helps us to understand this surprising ending as a provocation leading the readers back to the beginning of the gospel in Galilee and opening them to the role they themselves are to play in the future evangelization. The abrupt ending of the gospel, then, is not a mistake but an intended and masterful part of the author's narrative strategy.

As an example of another exegetical insight, the commentary offers an interesting alternative to the usual way of understanding 10,15: "Amen, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a child will not enter it". The usual way of understanding this verse is to take the "child" as the subject. In other words, one is to receive the Kingdom in the manner that a child would receive it, presumably with humble dependence upon God. But this commentary makes a good case for reading the "child" in 10,15 as a complement of the direct object. In other words, the Kingdom of God should be received as one would receive a child. This makes more sense within the Markan narrative logic of 10,13-16.



The commentary demonstrates a remarkable breadth of research, quoting numerous authors, not just narrative-critics of Mark, but authors from the entire spectrum of methodological approaches. The bibliography is well-balanced internationally. Widespread use is made not just of French authors but numerous English and German authors as well. In that sense, this newer narrative-critical commentary is well anchored to the past history of research on Mark.

To turn now to some constructive criticism, despite the breadth of research offered in this commentary, there are in this reviewer's opinion some features of the gospel of Mark that have been neglected or under represented. For example, in reading the commentaries on the individual units one often does not gain a sense of broader themes operative in the narrative progression. The commentary does not succeed as well as it could to bring out the overall narrative schema of the dynamic "way of the Lord" actualized in the "way" of Jesus that is announced at the beginning of the narrative (1,2-3) and that pervades not just certain sections but the entire narrative. One of the major characteristics of Mark's gospel is that Jesus is constantly on the move, actualizing the "way of the Lord," but the commentary does not highlight this (cf. E. Manicardi, *Il cammino di Gesù nel Vangelo di Marco. Schema narrativo e tema cristologico* [AnBib 96; Rome 1981]).

Similarly, in the treatment of the individual units comprising 11,1–16,8 the temple theme that pervades these units is undervalued. The commentary does not bring out the overarching theme of the temple that connects these units. The narrative is inviting its audience to become the community that supplants and surpasses the temple by implementing in their lives Jesus' teaching within the temple (11,1–12,44) and outside the temple (13,1–37). They are enabled to do this with the empowerment of Jesus' death and resurrection (14,1–16,8). Mark contains a unique temple theme in these chapters that the commentary neglects (cf. J. P. Heil, "The Narrative Strategy and Pragmatics of the Temple Theme in Mark", *CBQ* 59 [1997] 76–100).

Unconvincing to this reviewer is the commentary's interpretation of 1,13: "He was in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; but angels ministered to him". The commentary proposes that Jesus' being "with the wild beasts" means that he is at peace with these animals as a sign of the new creation, an indication of the victory of the new Adam (71). A theme of the new creation and Jesus as the new Adam would seem to be more of a Pauline than a Markan concern. In accord with the wilderness setting, that Jesus was "with the wild beasts" continues to describe his testing ordeal. In the biblical tradition wild animals are often associated with the wilderness, contributing to its dangerous and hostile character (Isa 34,9–15; Jer 10,22; Zeph 2,14; Ezek 34,5,25). As Israel of old encountered terrifying wild beasts during its testing while wandering through the wilderness (Num 21,6–9; Deut 8,15), Jesus likewise experiences the horror of "wild beasts" while tested by Satan in the wilderness.

The commentary's otherwise extensive research shows up lacking in its interpretation of the scene of Jesus' baptism (1,9–11). The notes suggest "apocalyptic theophany" as a literary genre designation for this scene, failing to mention the much more preferable designation of "interpretive vision" proposed by F. Lentzen-Deis, *Die Taufe Jesu nach den Synoptikern*.

*Literarkritische und gattungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Frankfurter Theologische Studien 4; Frankfurt 1970).

But this commentary is not alone in the failure of most biblical scholarship to use the terms “theophany,” “vision,” and “epiphany” more precisely as technical designations for very different literary genres. A “theophany” is a mainly OT literary genre that refers to the coming of God recognized by the terrifying circumstances that accompany it rather than by seeing the actual figure of God. A “vision” narrates the seeing by a privileged individual or individuals of supernatural phenomena located mainly in the heavenly realm. While an “epiphany” narrates a sudden and unexpected manifestation of a divine or heavenly being experienced by certain selected persons as an event independent of their seeing, in which the divine being reveals a divine attribute, action, or message (cf. J. P. Heil, *The Transfiguration of Jesus. Narrative Meaning and Function of Mark 9:2-8, Matt 17:1-8 and Luke 9:28-36* [AnBib 144; Rome 2000] 35-42). Much confusion in NT scholarship could be eliminated with a more precise use of these literary genre designations.

These critical suggestions in no way detract from the remarkable achievement of this narrative-critical commentary on Mark. It deserves a place along with the other major commentaries on the book self of every Markan specialist. And is to be recommended for anyone who wishes to gain a better understanding of the narrative dynamics at work in this gospel.

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Mira STARE, *Durch ihn leben. Die Lebensthematik in Joh 6* (NTAbh 49). Münster, Aschendorf, 2004. vii-366 p. 16 × 24.

Originally a doctoral dissertation, written under the direction of Dr. Martin Hasitschka, SJ, at the Leopold-Franzens-Universität, Innsbruck, this study is an intense analysis of the text of John 6. However, Stare’s dissertation is not a systematic and evaluative presentation of the many readings of this famous chapter, as they have appeared across the centuries, and continue unabated. There is a considered originality, as one would expect in a doctoral dissertation. She focuses upon the theme of “life”, and leans heavily on more recent text-oriented methodologies. The marriage of these two elements makes the book an original contribution to Johannine studies.

After pointing out the heavy presence of the theme of “life” in John 6, Stare expounds her method in a few succinct pages. The well-known communication theory that traces a movement from the extremes of the historical author to a historical reader, via a real author to a real reader (a distinction not always made) finds a number of further communications within the text itself: implicit author, fictive author, fictive narratee and implicit narratee (*Adressat*). The inner workings of the text are traced by following the characters described, and the characters entering into dialogue

*within the narrative.* Here she depends upon G. Fischer (*Wege in die Bibel. Leitfaden zur Auslegung* [Stuttgart 2000]), but I missed reference to the original proponent of this “communication theory”, S. Chatman (*Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* [Ithaca, NY 1978]). Once these basics are in place, she turns to an examination of the inner structure of the text, using the normal criteria (characters, time and space, movement, etc.), dividing John 6 into the following major sections: vv. 1-15, 16-21, 22-24, 25-71. She further subdivides each of these major sections into smaller units (*Äußerungseinheiten*) carefully following each single discussion between characters (*Gesprächsabschnitten*). The exegesis that forms the major part of the book (pp. 32-260) devotes careful attention to each single *ÄE* and *GA* (see below) and the relationships that exist across them, the major sections, and the Gospel as a whole.

The exegetical section of the study features an extremely close surface reading of the Johannine text itself. I do not use the expression “surface reading” in a negative sense. I merely wish to indicate that the reading is unfailingly synchronic, and that very little attention is paid to diachrony. Each passage is read in relation to its immediate context, to the other major sections or smaller units within John 6, and to the Gospel of John as a whole. Although there are several excellent excurses on the relationships that might or might not exist between John 6 and the Synoptic tradition, they only serve as excurses. They impinge very little on Stare’s reading of the Johannine text that is always given its Johannine meaning. Indeed, most of the excurses on possible Synoptic relationships only serve to show that while there may be apparent literary and even theological contacts between the traditions, close comparison only shows the uniqueness of the Johannine account. On the other hand, she has several very opportune excurses on possible Old Testament background to John 6. These are very well done and, as one would expect, throw light upon the Johannine passage.

Although the expression ζωή does not appear in vv. 1-15, 16-21 and 22-24, Stare claims that Jesus’ oneness with the Father as Son is implicit behind these narratives. In this way, the reader is prepared for the gift of life that the Son can give because of the Father-Son relationship. Of course, a reader who has just come from 5,1-47 is aware of the centrality of the Father-Son relationship, but I found that the role of the Father in these passages was presumed rather than proved. There are no references to the Father, scant indication of Jesus’ praying (εὐχαριστήσας in v. 11 might just qualify, but that is doubtful), and the miraculous does not have to depend upon Jesus’ relationship to the Father. It does, but the text does not say this. I make this point because Stare’s intense attention to what is in the text in those places where ζωή language does appear makes the link with the theme of life in vv. 1-24, not found in the text, something of a *tour de force*.

Across the discourse proper (vv. 25-59) and its aftermath (vv. 60-71), regarded by Stare as a single major textual unit, her careful work uncovers some very rewarding insights. Intense attention to the text rightly traces a careful, and supposedly deliberate, development of the theme of life, unique to the composition and theological perspective of John 6. The use of the expressions ζωή, ζωή αἰώνιος, ζῶ, and ζωοποιέω, gathered in this way only here in the Fourth Gospel, develops across the discourse and its aftermath in the

following fashion: (1) the food that will endure into eternal life, (2) Jesus as the giver of the food, the gift of the food and the receiver of its life, (3) the living Father, (4) the Spirit who gives life, (5) the words of Jesus as the words of eternal life. Many crucial Johannine theological themes are associated with this systematic presentation of the theme of life: life here and hereafter (Johannine eschatology), the association of the Father, the Son and the Spirit in the process of offering life, the sending of the Son by the Father for the life-giving nature of Jesus words, the essential nature of faith in Jesus for the reception of life, and the need for the disciple to accept the word of Jesus as a word of life, to mention only a few. Rightly, Stare points out that a great deal of all that is central to Johannine Theology and Christology can be located in John 6. Rising from a reading of Stare's study, there can be little doubt about the literary and theological unity of John 6, so long debated. It appears to me that these fruits of this excellent research are clearly substantiated in the text itself. They offer a fruitful contribution to Johannine studies, and cannot be gainsaid. It is also important that Stare has developed a use of a "communication theory" that enables her to reach outside the Johannine world to systematically indicate what the text says to a reader in any place, and in any time.

Thus, there is much to be admired in this thorough analysis of the text of John 6, within the broader context of the Gospel of John, oriented to a potential readership. Naturally, difficulties remain as we all have our own hopes and methods in reading any text. This is particularly the case for Christian scholars, for whom the Gospel of John is very much "the beloved text"! I was surprised by the association of vv. 60-71 with the discourse of vv. 25-59 to form a major section of vv. 25-71. Using the traditional criteria, the disciples as active characters in the narrative can be located in vv. 1-24. They are never found in vv. 25-59, although it is presupposed that they have heard the discourse when, in v. 60, they wonder who can listen to the "hard saying". As Stare herself recognizes, the disciples have received sufficient revelation (especially in the ἐγώ εἰμι μὴ φοβείσθε of v. 20) to understand many of the implications of the discourse. But the reader discovers, after waiting to meet them again for quite some time, that many struggle to accept Jesus' words, which give spirit and life (v. 63), and depart (v. 66). This leaves only Peter and the Twelve to accept that his word is the word of eternal life (v. 68). I suspect that Stare was influenced by the final "life-sayings" in vv. 63 and 68 and seduced by these passages into generating a single major unit where, perhaps, there should be two (vv. 25-59, vv. 60-71). As always with text-divisions, it depends upon the criteria one is adopting. There is a link between vv. 1-24 and 60-71 that she notices, but does not bring into play in her structure. In my opinion it is crucial, and it separates vv. 60-71 from vv. 25-59.

Two of the most challenging "Son of Man" sayings appear in John 6, at v. 27 and v. 53. Insufficient attention is given to the Johannine use of this traditional expression. On those pages where Stare does offer some general remarks (193-195, n. 501; 236-241) she associates the Son of Man with the Son too closely by following the majority position that takes it for granted that the Johannine Son of Man is determined by its link with ascent and descent (ἀναβαίνω – καταβαίνω). There are 13 Johannine Son of Man sayings. Only one of them (3,13) associates the Son of Man with ascent and descent. The passage in 6,62 does not speak of descent, but only ascent to

where he was before. Like most who have gone before her, 12 Johannine Son of Man sayings are interpreted in the light of one: 3,13. Stare's own careful methodology should have warned her against such an interpretation. The interpretation of twelve sayings in the light of one saying is improper. The twelve should interpret the meaning of the one. In other words, John 3,13 (and 6,62) must be interpreted in the light of the other Son of Man passages, and not vice-verse (on this, see F.J. Moloney, "The Johannine Son of Man Revisited", in Idem, *The Gospel of John. Text and Context* [BibIntSer 72; Boston – Leiden 2005] 66-92).

I support a reading of the Gospel of John in the light of its best interpreter, the Gospel of John. However, I felt uncomfortable reading this text that made very little reference to the fundamental background to John 6: the Jewish Passover celebration. The conflictual nature of the discourse (see vv. 28, 30-31, 41, 52) calls for some *Sitz im Leben*. Once Israel entered the Promised Land, the bread from heaven was no longer available. They had to sustain themselves from the fruits of their God-given land (Jos 6,11-12). But in some Jewish circles, they had another "bread from heaven": Torah. Behind John 6 there appears to be an appeal to a Jewish audience to recognize that the promise of the gift of life by means of observance of Torah has been perfected and transcended by the gift of Jesus, "the true bread from heaven" (see C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge 1953] 333-45). This issue is further enhanced by the Johannine use of the verbs ἐργάζομαι and γογγύζω. Both experiences, "working" to live by the Law, and "complaining" about the experience of the Exodus, have deep Jewish roots. Intense focus on the text itself, its major sections, and its tiny internal sections, and the interrelationship between them, and then their place within the Gospel of John is fine. But it needs more context. The study sometimes left me with the impression that John 6 was something like an object that had to be dissected, rather than a vivacious narrative that developed in a very real world.

Finally, a quibble from a non-German reader. Stare develops a series of codes to refer to the various elements that play a role in the communication process: S5, S4, S3, S2, S1; E1, E2, E3, E4, E5; KN1, KN2, KN3, KN4, KN5. Then there are further sigla for the division of the text: Æ, GA. Once these abbreviations have been established in the opening chapters, they are used for the rest of the book. The non-German reader keeps looking back to recall what exactly KN4, etc., refers to. This becomes extremely tedious. Why not simply state in German who or what is being referred to each time? This is a difficult book to read because of its intense focus upon the text, and a myriad of tables that must be given full attention. These abbreviations make the reading process even more difficult.

With these reservations, I warmly welcome this close reading of John 6, and its intense focus upon what it has to say about the theme of life in the Gospel as a whole. All who have a professional interest in the Gospel of John, Johannine Theology and Christology, the rich results of the use of newer methods of reading the text, and the impact that this text might make on readers of all times and places, will profit from a careful reading of this study.

## Varia

Amram TROPPER, *Wisdom, Politics, and Historiography. Tractate Avot in the Context of the Graeco-Roman Near East* (Oxford Oriental Monographs). Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004. xii-302 p. 14 × 22,5. £60.00

*Avot* is the only tractate of the *Mishnah* devoted not to *halakhah* (law), but to ethical teachings. Tropper relates this tractate to the Graeco-Roman, Near Eastern environment in which it was composed, and thus unravels its wider implications for the history of the early rabbinic movement and its literature.

Chapters 1–2 begin with *Avot* itself, focussing mainly on its literary features (a text based on Ms Kaufmann — as explained in 18 — and translation are provided in an appendix, 253–274). In ch. 1, Tropper demonstrates that the tractate is not a disorderly hotch-potch of rabbinic sayings — as commonly assumed — but quite on the contrary, a well-structured and carefully crafted composition. The over-arching structure of *Avot* is chronological, not only in its first two chapters (where the chain of succession from Moses to the sons of Rabbi Judah the Patriarch is explicitly laid out), but also in chapters 3–4 (where attributed sayings follow an approximate chronological order). The fifth (and last) chapter of *Avot* is numerically constructed. Other literary devices such as anaphora, anadiplosis, juxtaposition, rhythm, parallelism, and chiasm bring further structure to individual passages within the tractate. The central themes of the tractate, in Tropper's view, are righteous behaviour, observance of the commandments, and study of Torah, which all are to be rewarded in the world to come. Tropper places *Avot* within the genre of Jewish wisdom literature, and evaluates its relationship to earlier wisdom works. The overall purpose of *Avot*, in his view, is to mould the character of rabbinic students and instill them with the rabbinic world-view.

These first two chapters in Tropper's book are probably the most difficult to read, because of their detailed attention to literary techniques. Their significance, however, is soon appreciated when one reaches ch. 3. There Tropper discusses the date and editorship of *Avot*, on the basis of external evidence (from other rabbinic sources) and internal evidence (from the literary features of the tractate itself). His conclusion, that *Avot* was composed by Rabbi Judah the Patriarch or his sons in the early 3rd century at the about same time as the *Mishnah*, may come as no surprise. But this is not just a reiteration of the traditional view, since the full range of arguments is carefully and critically re-considered. Although the evidence is never as tight as one would wish it to be, one must concede that this traditional dating and attribution remain, if only by elimination, the most plausible view.

Ch. 4 is not strictly related to *Avot*, but discusses the general relationship between rabbinic Galilee and the Graeco-Roman world, and more specifically, between the Patriarch — as putative redactor of *Avot* — and his



surrounding, non-Jewish environment. The contents of this chapter will be familiar to many readers, but constitutes a necessary introduction to the argument that follows in the book. Tropper's emphasis on the cultural integration of the Patriarch in the gentile Near East (with, in his view, a 'positive attitude' to Hellenistic culture — 129) is one-sided, however, and forces somewhat the evidence. It clearly serves the needs of Tropper's argument in the rest of the book, yet contradicts his last-minute acknowledgement, in ch. 4, that *Avot* and the *Mishnah* are 'first and foremost... the products of a local Semitic culture' (135).

In the rest of the book, Tropper compares *Avot* and its authorship to the Second Sophistic (ch. 5), philosophical and other Classical literature from the Roman period (ch. 6), Roman jurisprudence (ch. 7), and early Christian sources (ch. 8), with a main focus on the succession of the 'pairs' and the patriarchal genealogy in the first two chapters of *Avot*. Comparisons of this kind have been suggested by earlier scholars, but Tropper revises them in the light of more recent research, demonstrating his mastery of a wide range of subjects and disciplines. These chapters are industriously, indeed prodigiously well researched — sometimes to the point of excessive and digressive scholarship (e.g. the 'overview' of the Second Sophistic, 137-146). They have much to teach a reader coming from a biblical or rabbinic scholarly background.

In his comparison of rabbinic Judaism to various aspects of Graeco-Roman culture, Tropper — following current thinking — rightly avoids the pitfalls associated with the notion of 'influence', and prefers instead to speak in terms of cultural interchange and of common socio-historical conditions. But his systematic search for parallels leads, almost inevitably, to a parallelomanic *impasse* which turns out, in many respects, to be simply unproductive (for an pronounced example of parallelomania, see 186, n. 102). Parallels with succession lists in Graeco-Roman philosophical writings (ch. 6) are admittedly striking; but ch. 8, searching for parallels with early Christianity, fails to produce any convincing connection with *Avot*; whilst ch. 7, on Roman jurisprudence, might have been relevant to the rest of the *Mishnah*, but is hardly relevant to the non-halakhic tractate of *Avot*.

The search for parallels also leads Tropper to emphasize similarities and ignore differences. He does not note that rabbis (or Rabbi, as editor of the *Mishnah*), unlike many Roman jurists, did not hold political or administrative positions within the Roman Empire or even — as far as we can tell — within local governmental structures (Rabbi was certainly not appointed 'nomothete' as his suggested counterpart in early 4th-century Sardis — 200). The social or political context of rabbinic law is hard to compare, therefore, with that of Roman jurisprudence. The parallelism between Hadrian's edition of the Urban Praetor's Edict and Rabbi's redaction of the *Mishnah* (199), for example, is only very superficial.

Another weakness is Tropper's use of social and/or literary theory, which is limited — reflecting, I presume, his Oxonian empiricist background — and not entirely judicious. His last-minute appeal to P.L. Berger and Th. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY 1966), for a concluding interpretation of *Avot* as a document legitimizing the rabbinic movement (243-245), is uncritical



(surely the Berger-Luckmann model is not without flaws?) and artificially constructed; it is unclear, moreover, what the Berger-Luckmann model adds or contributes to Tropper's overall interpretation. Elsewhere, Tropper's argument can often be marred by conceptual vagueness: 'dominant atmosphere of the gentile Near East' (117-119), 'shared intellectual/cultural atmosphere' (196-198), 'cultural popular trends', 'cultural sensibilities' (125), or in a different vein, 'proto-orthodox Christianity' (ch. 8 *passim*), are all nebulous concepts that are ill-defined and potentially erroneous.

But my main critique of this monograph is its excessive focus on the succession list of *Avot* 1-2, which becomes the dominant object of comparison with Graeco-Roman culture throughout chs. 6-8. There is relatively little on *Avot* 3-5, and little analysis of the ethical or other contents of the sayings collected throughout this tractate. Surely the contents of the sayings would have been the main intended purpose of the tractate, and may have produced interesting grounds of comparison with Graeco-Roman culture. In short, this book delivers much on historiography, but less on politics, and even less on wisdom.

Some details: 12, n. 37: the end of the note is missing; 84: a particularly nice interpretation of *Avot* 2,15; 102-107, 112, and 132, n. 68: since Rabbi is not explicitly identified, in *Avot* 2,1, as the son of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, there is no evidence that *Avot* claims Rabbi to have belonged to the Gamalielite dynasty. Rabbis' position at the beginning of *Avot* 2 may indicate, on the contrary, the beginning of a new dynasty. See now S. Stern, "Rabbi and the Origins of the Patriarchate", *JJS* 54 (2003) 192-215; 114-116: no apparent reference to the Patriarch *Ellel* in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30:4; 120-121, 127-135: uncritical use of literary, rabbinic sources as historical evidence; 121-122: see T. Rajak, "The Rabbinic Dead and the Diaspora Dead at Beth She'arim", *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*, vol. 1 (ed. P. Schäfer) (Tübingen 1998) 349-366. Do Greek funerary inscriptions (in Beth She'arim and elsewhere) indicate 'proficiency' in Greek? Are English Jews buried today in Bushey (London) proficient in Hebrew?; 147, n. 40: over-reliance on an unconvincing (albeit convenient) theory; 149, n. 46: is knowledge of Biblical Hebrew grammar essential for composition of sentences in that language?; 155: '(the later Patriarchs) chose to rise in Roman society and function as statesmen and politicians in the imperial establishment, expressing their authority through the power structure of the Roman Empire'. This is plainly incorrect. The imperial titles bestowed on the Patriarchs of the late 4th - early 5th centuries were purely honorific; and there is no prosopographic evidence of Jewish patriarchs in the imperial service. A comparison between Jewish patriarchs and Christian bishops (rather than with aristocrats of the Second Sophistic) is more appropriate in the later Roman period; 205, n. 63: unfounded suggestion that *Avot* intends to present the 'essence of Judaism'; index (299-302): generally slim. No reference, for example, to the name 'Hillel', in spite of a comprehensive study in relation to *Avot* 2,4 (107-116).

To conclude on a positive note: this book demonstrates remarkable proficiency in ancient history and literature, and thus signals the good start of a promising career. Most commendable in this book is its fresh look at the rabbinic, tannaitic movement as a Near Eastern version of the contemporary

Second Sophistic (ch. 6). Tropper rightly argues that both movements were led by intellectual, often aristocratic élites that attempted to revive their cultural heritage through the medium of classicist literature and scholasticism, and to create an identity that often served political purposes within the cities and provinces of the Roman Empire. Like the Second Sophistic, and in the aftermath of the failed Jewish revolts against Rome, rabbinic Judaism sought to build a strong socio-cultural identity together with a more accommodating stance towards the ruling empire.

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Carl B. SMITH II, *No Longer Jews*. The Search for Gnostic Origins. Peabody, Hendrickson Publishers, 2004. xvii-317 p. 16 × 23,5. £18.95.

Modern scholarship on Gnosticism can be said to have begun in the eighteenth century, and a prominent issue in that scholarship has been the question of the origins of Gnosticism. Historians of Christianity have tended to look upon Gnosticism as an intra-Christian phenomenon, i.e. as a Christian “heresy”. Historians of religions, on the other hand, have situated Gnosticism within a larger context of Oriental religious syncretism, and have understood it as originally independent of Christianity. Many scholars have argued for a pre-Christian origin, and posited Gnostic influences on some of the writings of the New Testament, notably Paul’s epistles and the Gospel of John.

The discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices in 1945 and the gradual publication of the Nag Hammadi texts put scholarship on Gnosticism on an entirely new footing. Now primary Gnostic texts could be studied, and scholars were no longer confined to the secondary evidence for Gnosticism found in the writings of the Gnostics’ enemies, the church fathers. Nevertheless, it can hardly be said that the study of our primary evidence has led to a scholarly consensus on the major issues involved. Indeed, the basic division already noted between the views of historians of Christianity and historians of religions still pertains. Only now those who argue for an independent or even pre-Christian origin of Gnosticism tend to look upon Judaism as the primary context for its origins, owing to the massive influence from the Jewish scriptures, Jewish traditions of exegesis, and Jewish literary genres (e.g., apocalypses) exhibited in our primary texts.

In 1973 Edwin Yamauchi published a survey of scholarship on Gnosticism, with special attention to the question of its origins (E.M. Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism, A Survey of the Proposed Evidences* [Grand Rapids 1973, second edition 1983]). He granted the heavy influence of Judaism (and Platonism) in Gnosticism, but he concluded that it is neither pre-Christian in origin nor completely independent of Christianity. He suggested a time for its origins in the period following the Second Jewish

Revolt (132-135). In the book here under review Yamauchi's student, Carl B. Smith, argues for a Jewish context for the origins of Gnosticism in Egypt following the Jewish revolt against Trajan (115-117).

In his Introduction, Smith takes up the problem of Gnosticism's "essence", and suggests that the unique and definitive element in Gnosticism is its anti-cosmic dualism, and especially its hostility to the biblical (Jewish) God, the world's Creator (p. 1). He sees three "critical issues" in the quest for gnostic origins: "(1) the religious and intellectual context out of which Gnosticism emerged; (2) its primary geographical setting; and (3) the chronology of its development" (p. 2). These issues are discussed at length in the chapters that follow.

In Chapter 1 Smith discusses the various theories that have been put forward regarding the definition of Gnosticism, and its origins. He notes that no unanimity has been achieved among scholars as to what Gnosticism is (or even if it existed!). For his part he considers Gnosticism to be a religion in its own right, distinct from either Judaism or Christianity, and sees as its "unique feature" a "radical anti-cosmism" involving "the inversion of the Jewish God into the evil demiurge" (19). He then discusses the various scholarly theories as to how Gnosticism originated: as a Christian heresy, a product of Iranian dualism, a product of Platonic philosophical thought, a product of Hermeticism, a product of pagan religious syncretism, or as a product of Jewish speculation. He opts for the last-named option, and cites a number of scholars who have taken that position (R. McL. Wilson, G. Quispel, G. MacRae, K. Rudolph, B. Pearson, A. Segal, H. Green, G. Stroumsa, J. Fossum, P. Perkins, and others). Of course, the anti-Judaism of Gnosticism (or, more precisely, its attitude toward the biblical Creator), must be accounted for historically, i.e. in terms of socio-political crises experienced by the Jewish people in the Roman era.

Smith takes up that problem in chapter two ("Gnostic Origins: Jewish Social and Political Crises"), raising the question of the historical setting in which the Gnostic innovation emerged. Various answers have been suggested by scholars: the Hasmonean period in the first century B.C. (D. Parrott), first-century Palestine and Syria (K. Rudolph et al.), the first Jewish revolt (R. M. Grant), the period between the Jewish revolts (70-135 C.E., N. Dahl), and the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135, E. Yamauchi et al.). Smith then puts forward his own theory: Gnosticism arose among Jews in Alexandria in the aftermath of the revolt in Cyrene and Egypt against Trajan (115-117).

The history of the revolt against Trajan is treated in chapter three ("The Jewish Revolt under Trajan: A Historical Reconstruction and Its Implications"). Smith discusses the history of events leading up to the revolt and its causes, political, socio-economic, and religious. The major religious cause of the revolt was a strong messianic fervor among some (but not all) Jews. He also discusses the effects of the revolt upon the Romans, native Egyptians, the Jewish communities in Alexandria and elsewhere in Egypt, and the Christians. Smith agrees with those who have argued that "Jewish history in Egypt, at least for the immediate decades following the revolt, essentially ends" (109), though he does allow for the survival of some Jews in Alexandria, among whom the Gnostic innovation presumably occurred. "The Jewish revolt under Trajan was not only the catalyst for the distinction

between Jews and Christians of the region, but also the stimulus for the development of gnostic concepts of theology" (112).

Chapter four is the longest chapter of the book ("Chronological and Geographical Considerations for Gnostic Origins"). Here he discusses the chronology of teachers often labeled as "Gnostic": Simon Magus of Samaria (fl. 40-65?), Menander of Samaria (late 1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> c.), Cerinthus of Asia Minor (late 1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> c.) Carpocrates of Alexandria (Egypt, 120s) and his son Epiphanes, Saturninus of Antioch (Syria, 120s?), Basilides of Alexandria (Egypt, 120-150s), and later Gnostic teachers (Valentinus, Marcion [sic]). He concludes that only those who flourished subsequent to 115-117 can legitimately be characterized as "Gnostics", i.e. those whose teachings reflect his *sine qua non* of Gnosticism: anti-cosmism and hostility toward the Jewish Creator. In his discussion of polemical works related to Gnosticism, he finds no anti-Gnostic polemics in the New Testament (not even 1 Tim 6,20) or in the Apostolic Fathers. Nor does he find any possible reference to Gnosticism in early Rabbinic writings or in Middle Platonism. While some Nag Hammadi texts include polemics against other Gnostics, none of them date to the period before 115-117. He concludes that Gnosticism arose "in a second-century environment in which several religions were seeking self-definition. ... From this environment the gnostic belief system emerged as a religion in its own right, highly dependent upon Judaism, Christianity, and Platonism as its points of departure, but highly innovative in defining itself as a unique and separate tradition" (214).

In the fifth and final chapter ("Sethian Gnosticism, the Geography of Heresy, and a Proposal for Gnostic Origins") Smith takes up for discussion "Sethian" Gnosticism, as represented by several of the Nag Hammadi texts, because this form of Gnosticism is often taken to be the earliest. He sees no evidence for Sethian Gnosticism before the second century. As to the geography of the Gnostic "heresy" (Samaria, Syro-Palestine, Asia Minor, Egypt) Egypt (i.e. Alexandria) is taken to be the likeliest place where Gnosticism arose. Smith then proposes some possibilities as to "how it might have happened", moving here "from the more certain realm of the historical to the more tentative realm of the theoretical" (244). In the discussion that follows there is repeated use of the expression "may have". E.g., Gnosticism "may have" originated within Jewish Christianity. He regards as "most certain" the relative time frame (after 117) and the place where it occurred (Alexandria). Basilides of Alexandria assumes a prominent role in this discussion and in the book as a whole, even to its title ("no longer Jews", Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.24.6).

This is a highly readable and informative work, but it is not without its problems. For one thing, Smith's definition of Gnosticism as anti-cosmic hostility to the Jewish Creator overlooks an essential feature of Gnosticism, its insistence on *gnosis* as the basis for salvation, and its notion of the consubstantiality of the human soul with the transcendent God, a feature which would exclude Marcion from the discussion. Smith too hastily dismisses the arguments of many scholars who would characterize Simon Magus as an early gnostic teacher, insisting instead on "the accuracy of Luke's account in Acts" (129). Smith also too quickly rejects the findings of those scholars who apply source- and tradition-criticism to some of the

Gnostic texts. For example, scholars have argued for the secondary “Christianization” of the basic Sethian Gnostic myth, e.g., the one in the *Apocryphon of John* (NHC II,1; III,1; IV,1; BG,2). Completely absent from Smith’s discussion is Mandaicism, a very important phenomenon in the larger history of Gnosticism, and whose mythology closely parallels that of several of the Sethian Gnostic texts from the Nag Hammadi corpus. And while I myself have argued that Gnosticism can be considered “a religion in its own right”, the distinctions Smith makes between Gnosticism and Christianity are much too rigid. It can hardly be argued that “Basilides and his followers rejected Christianity” (140). On the contrary, Basilides was a highly learned Christian teacher in early Alexandrian Christianity, a precursor in many ways of Clement and Origen, even if his version of Christianity must be qualified with the adjective “Gnostic”.

Nevertheless, there is much of value in Smith’s book. Readers will gain a good appreciation of the problems in defining Gnosticism and tracing historically its origins. It will assume a prominent place in on-going scholarship on these issues.

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